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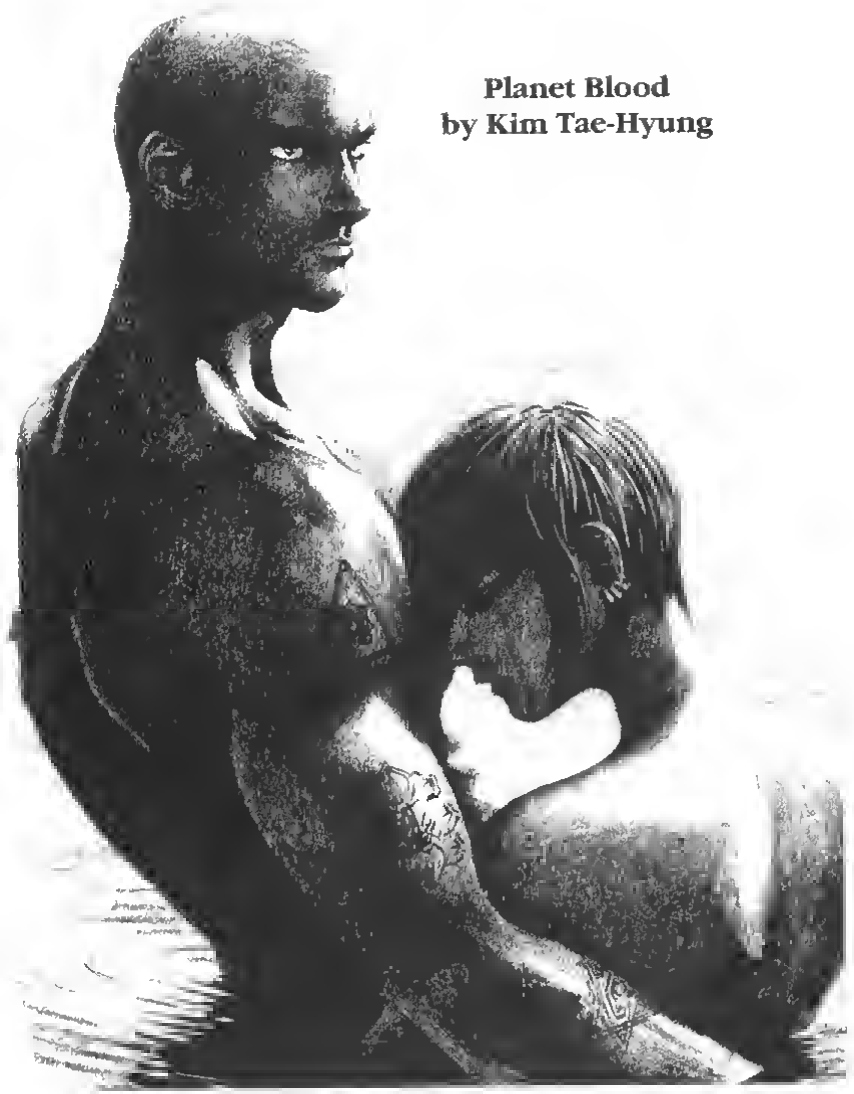
PLANET BLOOD™

III

KIM TAE-HYUNG



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by Kim Tae-Hyung

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Created by
Kim Tae-Hyung

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In the year Universal Century 0091, the Mars and Moon colonies were embroiled in a bloody war over repatriation rights for the newly restored Earth. The desperation of the battle drove the Moon colony to use their deadliest weapon, Attack Satellite Dike. The subsequent blast opened up a rift in time and space, sending Mars Force mecha pilot Sinan into an entirely new world.

Horai is a land akin to Europe's middle ages, kings and princes mount vast military campaigns to wrest control of neighboring lands away from their rightful rulers. Traces of magic exist in Horai, manifest in very few individuals and in the six legendary Neoptolemos—powerful, mystical warriors that can be unlocked by one of six magical scrolls, the kind of warriors that could tip the balance in Horai's incessant struggle for superiority.

Still reeling from the shock of his strange teleportation, Sinan rescues Princess Mayi, the rightful heir to the Kingdom of Gaiya, from a group of marauders. With no idea where he has been dropped or what he must do here, Sinan joins Mayi and is introduced to Prince Noodles of Pratria, rightful heir to the Kingdom of Pratria and leader of a rebel army to move against his twin brother Zetsos, who has usurped the throne of Pratria and aligned himself with various leaders bent on taking over all of Horai. But Pratria has a third party vying for its crown—Pantera, illegitimate half-brother to Noodles and Zetsos.

Noodles, reunited with his mystic Telamon, who the Prince freed on his recapture of the Pratrian castle, has decided to form a group to seek out the Neoptolemos for a large battle against his brother's forces.

As Sinan, Noodles, Mayi, Satu and their band of soldiers set out in search of the Neoptolemos, Indigo and his group of assassins, sent by Zetsos' queen Atalante, stealthily follow the Pratrian assemblage. Still unaware that Noodles has returned, Atalante is desperate to find out who overtook Pratria, but it seems as if Indigo has orders from someone else.

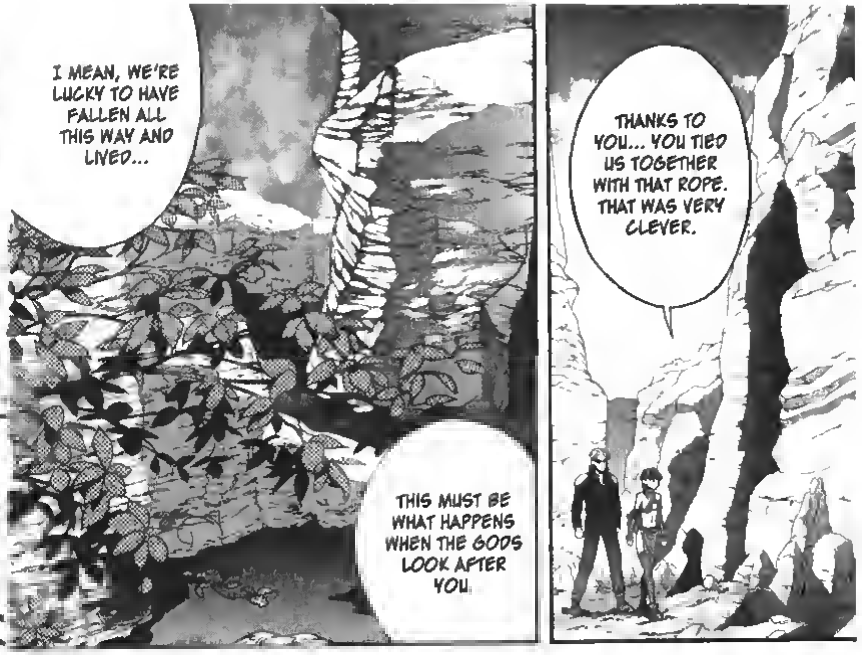
Deep into the journey, the party encounters Scott, a pilot for the Moon Federation who has also been warped into the world of Horai. After an initial scuffle, he ends up joining the party as well. Telamon eventually realizes that they are being followed, but not before the party splits into smaller groups. Indigo's assassins spur Satu into a fight, and Indigo himself finds Noodles and challenges him to duel.

In the confusion, Yan, another Mars Federation soldier and best friend to Sinan who now works under Zetsos, kidnaps Mayi and then promptly releases her with the idea that she would lead him to the rest of Noodles' allies and allow him to kill Prince Noodles once and for all. Instead, Mayi comes across Sinan and Scott, leading Yan right to his once comrade. Yan tells Sinan that he's looking to fill his own ambition for power in this new world and that Sinan should stand at his side in doing so. Sinan of course refuses to join Yan, and in the ensuing scuffle, Sinan, Scott and Mayi fall off a cliff into the raging river below.

Meanwhile, Pantera makes contact with Zetsos and promises the false king of Pratria that he'll bring him the head of Zetsos' military ally, Murserek, making Zetsos the de facto leader of not only his own kingdom but also the neighboring kingdom of Murserek and other outlying lands that can't defend themselves against such a vast army.

WHAT SHOULD I DO? HE NEEDS RESPIRATION, BUT A PRINCESS CANNOT KISS A COMMONER... ESPECIALLY A STRANGER.
AH!
UNHHH...
OOH... UNGGGH...
SCOTT!
SCOTT! WAKE UP!
HE OPENED HIS EYES! I THINK HE'S ALL RIGHT!
WAKE UP!
HUNH...
HUNNH...
OW!
OOH...
UNGGH...

UNNH? M-MAY!
SCOTT...
I'm hurt, but all right.
SCOTT, YOU'RE ALIVE!
HUH?
REALLY!
WE'RE VERY LUCKY!
HEH HEH HEH!!


I MEAN, WE'RE LUCKY TO HAVE FALLEN ALL THIS WAY AND LIVED...
THIS MUST BE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE GODS LOOK AFTER YOU.
THANKS TO YOU... YOU TIED US TOGETHER WITH THAT ROPE. THAT WAS VERY CLEVER.

HA HA! OH, IT'S NOTHING. I MEAN, MORE CHANCE OF US SURVIVING TOGETHER, RIGHT?
I WAS SO SCARED WHEN YOU WOULDN'T MOVE. I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
I WAS WONDERING WHAT I WOULD DO ALL ALONE...I CERTAINLY COULDN'T GO BACK.

I REMEMBER NOW! I LOST CONSCIOUSNESS WHEN WE WERE DRIFTING DOWN THE RIVER.
WHEN I FINALLY MADE IT TO THE BANK, A HORRIBLE MONSTER GRABBED ME.
IT WAS ALL OVER ME, AND IT WAS TRYING TO KISS ME, SAYING THAT IT WAS MOUTH-TO-MOUTH, OR WHATEVER...
I'M GLAD I WOKE UP BEFORE IT--
아하하
화끄끄
꼬옥
WHY DID YOU WAKE UP AND RUIN IT? YOU SHOULD HAVE JUST STAYED UNCONSCIOUS!
HUH?
IT WON'T BE FAR NOW...
THE NEOPTOLEMOS, ONE OF THE GREAT WARRIORS, IS RESTING NEARBY.

MAYI! SLOW DOWN!
HMPH!
WILL YOU CALM DOWN? I DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING BY IT!
IT WAS A STUPID DREAM-- THAT'S ALL!
HMMPH! THEY SAY TRUTH IS REVEALED IN DREAMS! THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY THINK OF ME, ISN'T IT? WHY NOT JUST CALL ME "LAMIA"?

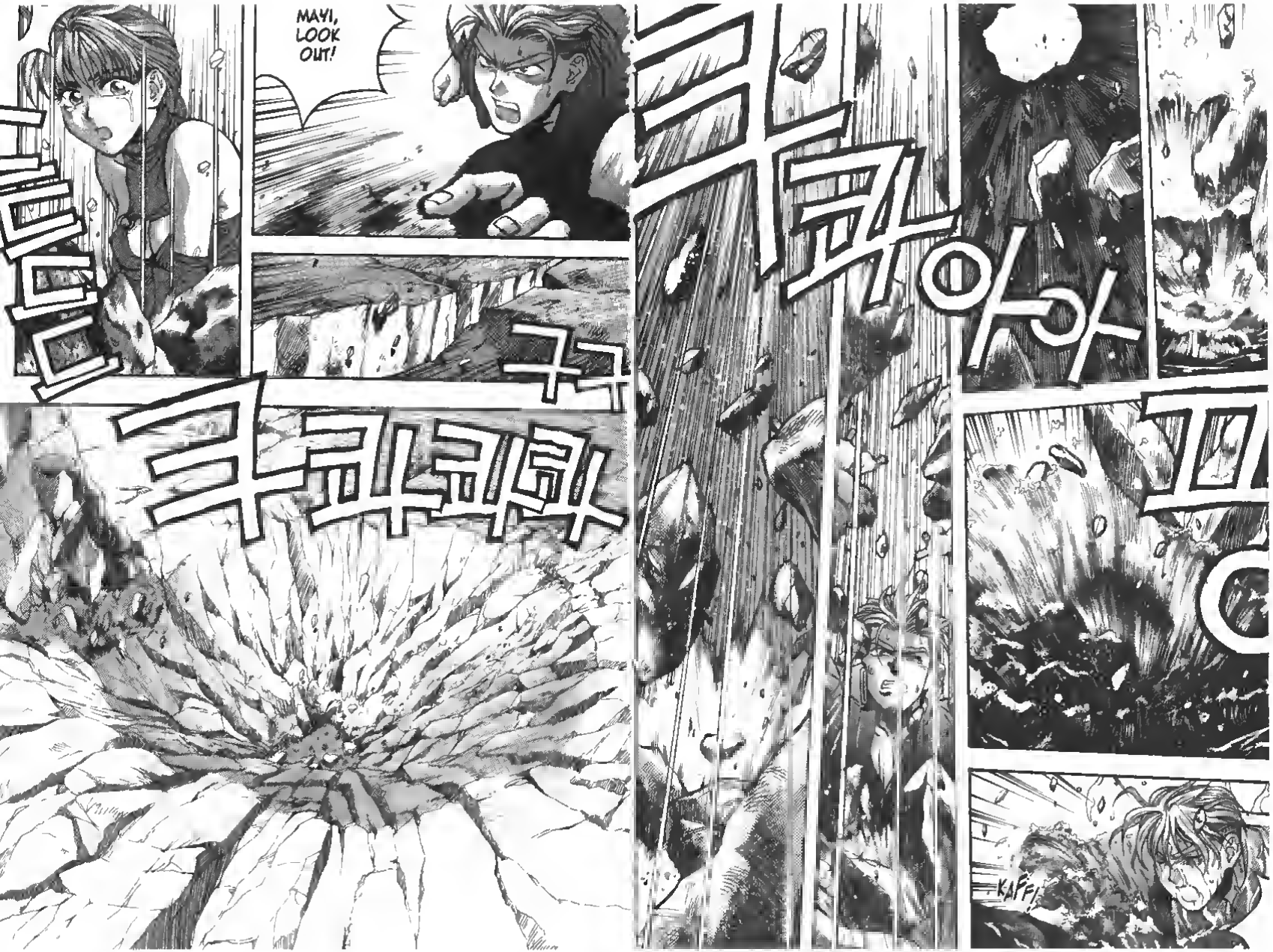
Lamia. A monster in Greek mythology whose upper half is a woman and whose lower half is a serpent.

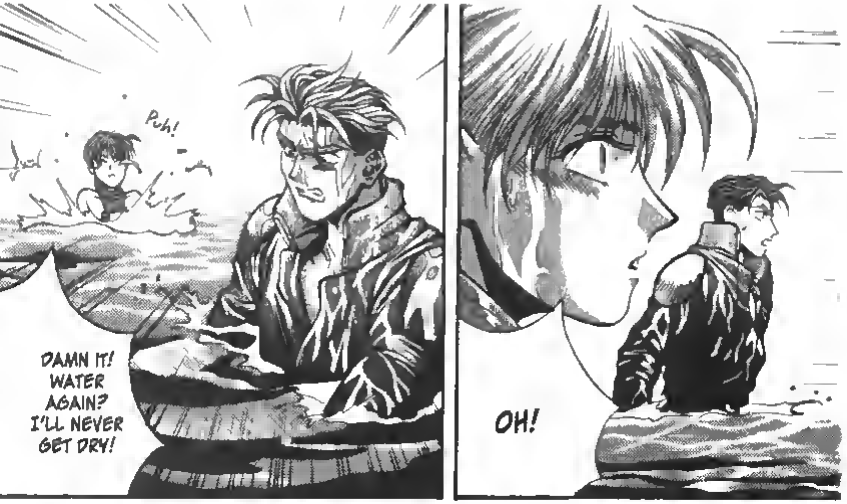
GEEZ!
FINE, BE THAT WAY. WE'LL PART COMPANY HERE. YOU CAN LOOK OUT FOR YOURSELF FROM NOW ON.
I'LL JUST GO MY OWN WAY! I'LL MAKE FASTER PROGRESS, FOR SURE!
OH, SCOTT...
HAH, I KNEW SHE'D CAVE! SHE WANTS ME!

YOU CALLED?
YES... AND I'M SORRY.
PERHAPS I OVER-REACTED. I TEND TO LOSE MY TEMPER SOMETIMES.
OH, IT'S NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR...
See! Ha ha ha!
...
I... I TRIED TO APOLOGIZE...
I'm brave!
TSK!
OH? THEN I WON'T APOLOGIZE
INSTEAD, I'LL CALL YOU A COWARDLY PUNK!
FINE! GO ON YOUR OWN! YOU THINK I NEED YOU TO PROTECT ME? HMPH!
WELL, IF SHE'S GOING TO BE LIKE THAT...
PFPT! WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

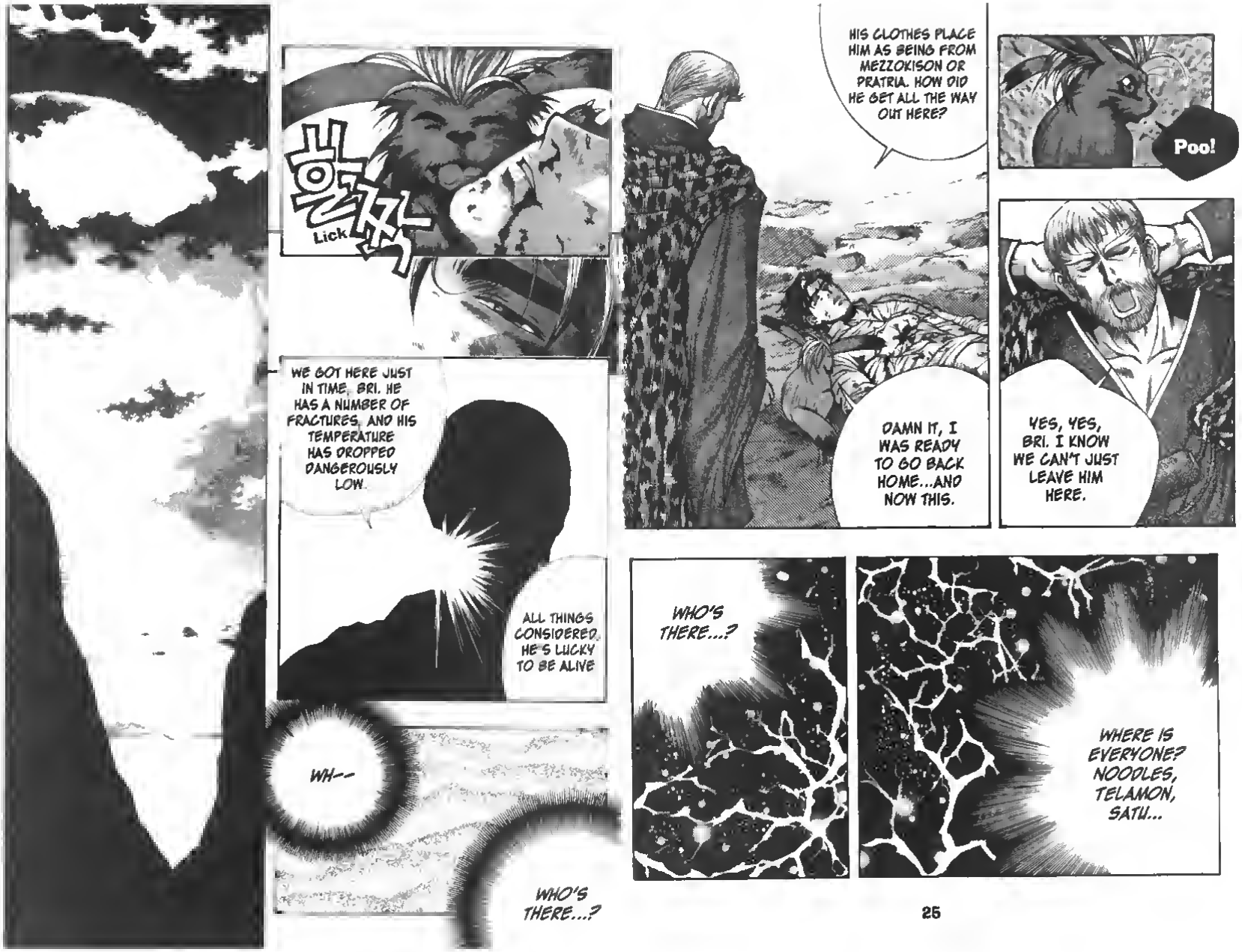
MEN! WHEN IT'S GOOD FOR THEIR EGOS, THEY PROTECT YOU; WHEN IT'S NOT, THEY IGNORE YOU!
MY DAD WASN'T LIKE THAT!
Actually, she has no memories at all of her father.
...
WELL, I'M OVER HIM!
툭
WELL, HE'S NOT HERE NOW, ANYWAY
JUST AS WELL.
WHAT IS IT, SCOTT? STOP HIDING LIKE A LITTLE BABY!
휘릭
FOLLOWING ME BECAUSE YOU CAN'T ADMIT YOU'RE LOST?! YOU'RE PATHETIC!
I DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE I AM...NO SENSE IN BOTH OF US BEING LOST.

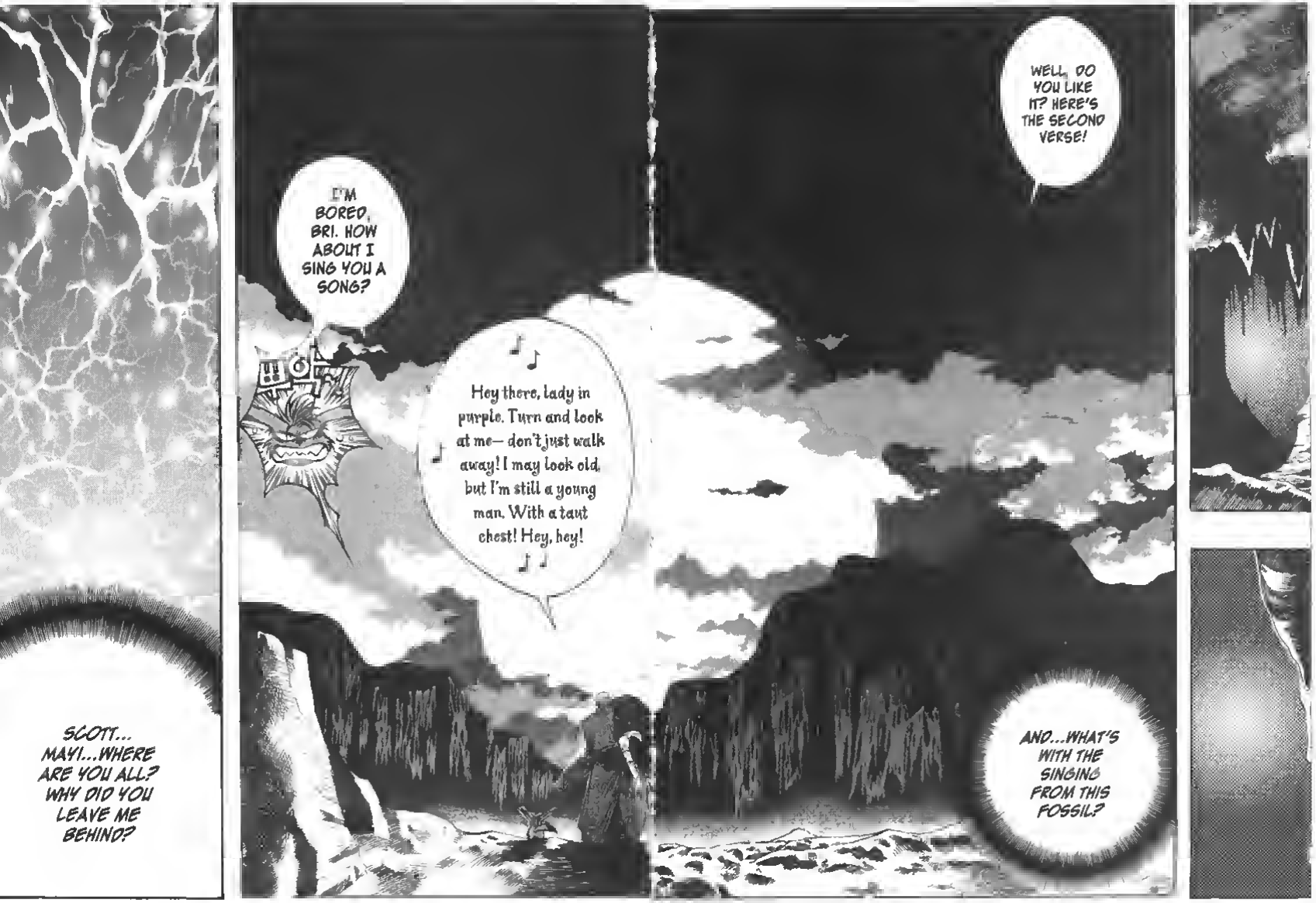
I WONDER WHERE THE OTHERS WENT? NOODLES, SATU, TELAMON?
AND SINAN...
MARS WAS COLD AND DEAD. THIS WORLD IS ALIVE.
AND BESIDES... THERE'S SOMEONE I LOVE HERE.
OH, SINAN...
...IF I'D KNOWN IT WAS GOING TO END LIKE THIS...
I HAVE TO FIND SINAN!
HE CAN'T BE DEAD!
I KNOW HE'S NOT!
드드


MAYI, LOOK OUT!
KAFFI


Puh!
DAMN IT! WATER AGAIN? I'LL NEVER GET DRY!
OH!

HEY... WHERE ARE WE?


Lick
HIS CLOTHES PLACE HIM AS BEING FROM MEZZOKISON OR PRATRIA. HOW DID HE GET ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?
Poo!
DAMN IT, I WAS READY TO GO BACK HOME...AND NOW THIS.
YES, YES, BRI. I KNOW WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM HERE.
WE GOT HERE JUST IN TIME, BRI. HE HAS A NUMBER OF FRACTURES, AND HIS TEMPERATURE HAS DROPPED DANGEROUSLY LOW.
ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, HE'S LUCKY TO BE ALIVE
WH--
WHO'S THERE...?
WHO'S THERE...?
WHERE IS EVERYONE? NOODLES, TELAMON, SATU...


SCOTT... MAYI...WHERE ARE YOU ALL? WHY DID YOU LEAVE ME BEHIND?
I'M BORED, BRI. HOW ABOUT I SING YOU A SONG?
Hey there, lady in purple. Turn and look at me— don't just walk away! I may look old, but I'm still a young man. With a taut chest! Hey, hey!
WELL, DO YOU LIKE IT? HERE'S THE SECOND VERSE!
AND...WHAT'S WITH THE SINGING FROM THIS FOSSIL?

SCOTT...
DID YOU HAVE A GOOD DREAM?
끄덕
ARE YOU STILL TIRED?
NO, I SLEPT VERY WELL.
THIS CAVERN HAS TO OPEN UP SOMEWHERE ON THE SURFACE...
AT LEAST, THAT'S WHAT WE HAVE TO TELL OUR-SELVES.
SCOTT...CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
YOU COME FROM THE SAME WORLD AS SINAN, RIGHT?
IS THERE WAR THERE, TOO?
MNNN... GUESS I FELL ASLEEP... MM...
HMMM...?
끄덕

EVERYONE WAS TRYING TO RESTORE OUR PLANET'S ECOLOGY...
...BUT EVERYONE HAD A DIFFERENT IDEA HOW TO DO IT.
I NEVER SAW A TREE UNTIL MY MOM TOOK ME TO A BOTANICAL GARDEN...
...AND THEN SHE SAID WE COULD LIVE PEACEFULLY, SURROUNDED BY THOSE TREES, IF WE HAD THE DESIRE TO FIGHT FOR IT.
I WAS FIGHTING FOR THAT PEACE. BUT IN THE END, IT DEGENERATED INTO A FIGHT TO SEE WHO GOT THE BEST LAND.

SINAN WAS RIGHT WHEN HE SAID THIS WORLD IS THE IMAGE OF WHAT WE WANTED OUR PLANET TO BE.
SINAN WAS MY ENEMY, BUT HIS SIDE WAS FIGHTING FOR THE SAME PEACE.

OH, SCOTT. LOOK OVER HERE.
MAYI, WHAT...?

IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
THESE FLOWERS ARE CALLED HERSE. THEY'RE LUMINESCENT... THEY GLOW IN THE DARK.
Herse Dew Drops
ACCORDING TO LEGEND, A WOMAN WHO WEEPED INCESSANTLY FOR HER SLAIN LOVER TURNED INTO THESE FLOWERS TO ILLUMINATE HIS PATH TO THE AFTERLIFE.
MAYI, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

SCOTT, DID SINAN...
IS HE DEAD?
I DON'T THINK I CAN STAND IT...
I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT HIM, BUT I CAN'T STOP.
I...I THINK I REALLY LOVE HIM.

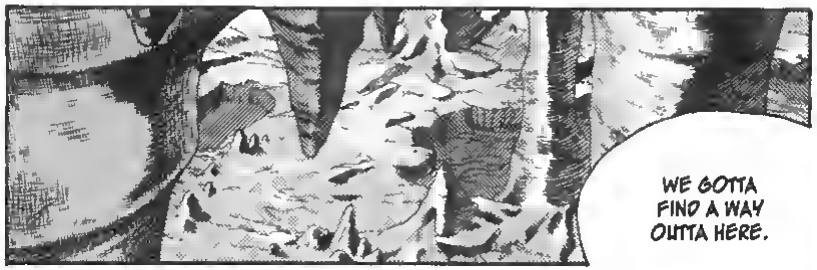
Sniff!
MAYI, COME HERE...
Sob!
...CRY ALL YOU WANT. HERE, WHERE NO ONE ELSE CAN SEE.
WHY?
WHY IS IT THAT EVERYONE I LOVE HAS TO DIE? WHY?!

MIA!
DO YOU STILL MISS ME? I HATE TO THINK THAT YOU'RE LIVING IN SADNESS.
I'LL NEVER SEE YOU AGAIN
FORGIVE ME

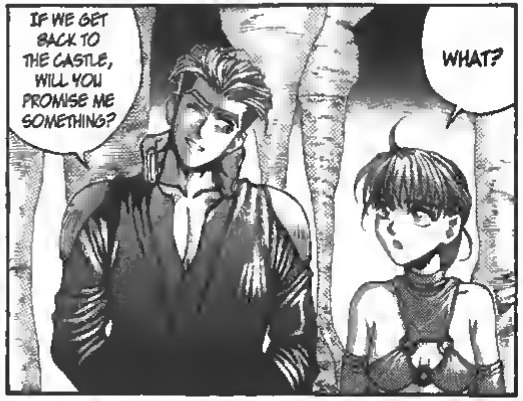
THERE NOW...DON'T YOU FEEL BETTER?
SNF! UH-HUH...

THANK YOU, SCOTT. IF YOU HADN'T BEEN HERE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT...

...
..!!
WELL, WE'D BETTER GO!


WE GOTTA FIND A WAY OUTTA HERE.

...


IF WE GET BACK TO THE CASTLE, WILL YOU PROMISE ME SOMETHING?
WHAT?

LET'S GO OUT ON A DATE!
WE'LL TAKE A WALK IN THE COURTYARD, CHAT WHILE SITTING ON THE BRANCH OF A BIG TREE...

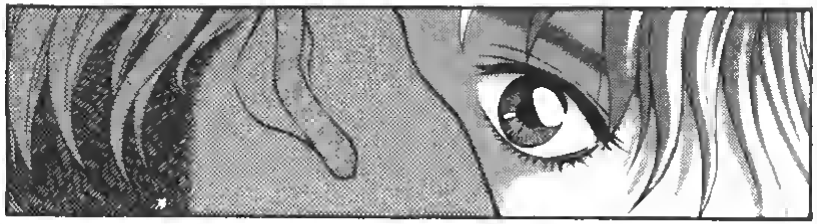
DATE? YOU MEAN LIKE ON A CALENDAR?

WELL, NO...UM...
Darn how can she not know what a date is?
A DATE IS WHEN A MAN AND A WOMAN AGREE TO MEET AND HAVE A GOOD TIME TOGETHER.

I...WANT TO GET MARRIED WHEN THIS WAR IS OVER.

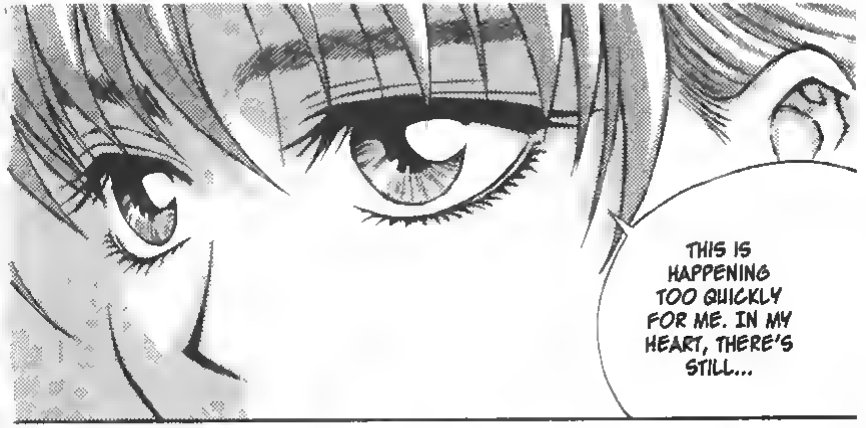
I'LL BE DRESSED IN A LONG, WHITE COTTON DRESS, ACCENTED WITH YELLOW SPRING FLOWERS, AND I'LL WEAR A SHEER VEIL.

MY PARENTS DIED WHEN I WAS YOUNG AND I HAVE NO SIBLINGS, SO I'VE THOUGHT ABOUT THIS SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL.
I'M GOING TO HAVE A LOT OF CHILDREN AND LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER WITH THEM. AND MY HUSBAND, OF COURSE. HE'LL BE--



MAYI, WHAT?

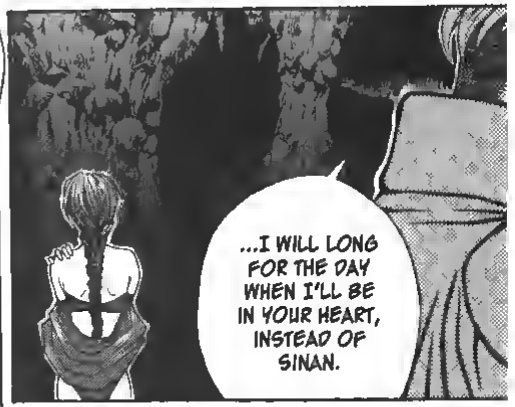
I'M SORRY, SCOTT.


THIS IS HAPPENING TOO QUICKLY FOR ME. IN MY HEART, THERE'S STILL...

SINAN? SINAN STILL HAS HIS PLACE THERE?

...

I UNDER-STAND. I'LL LET YOU TAKE YOUR TIME, BUT...

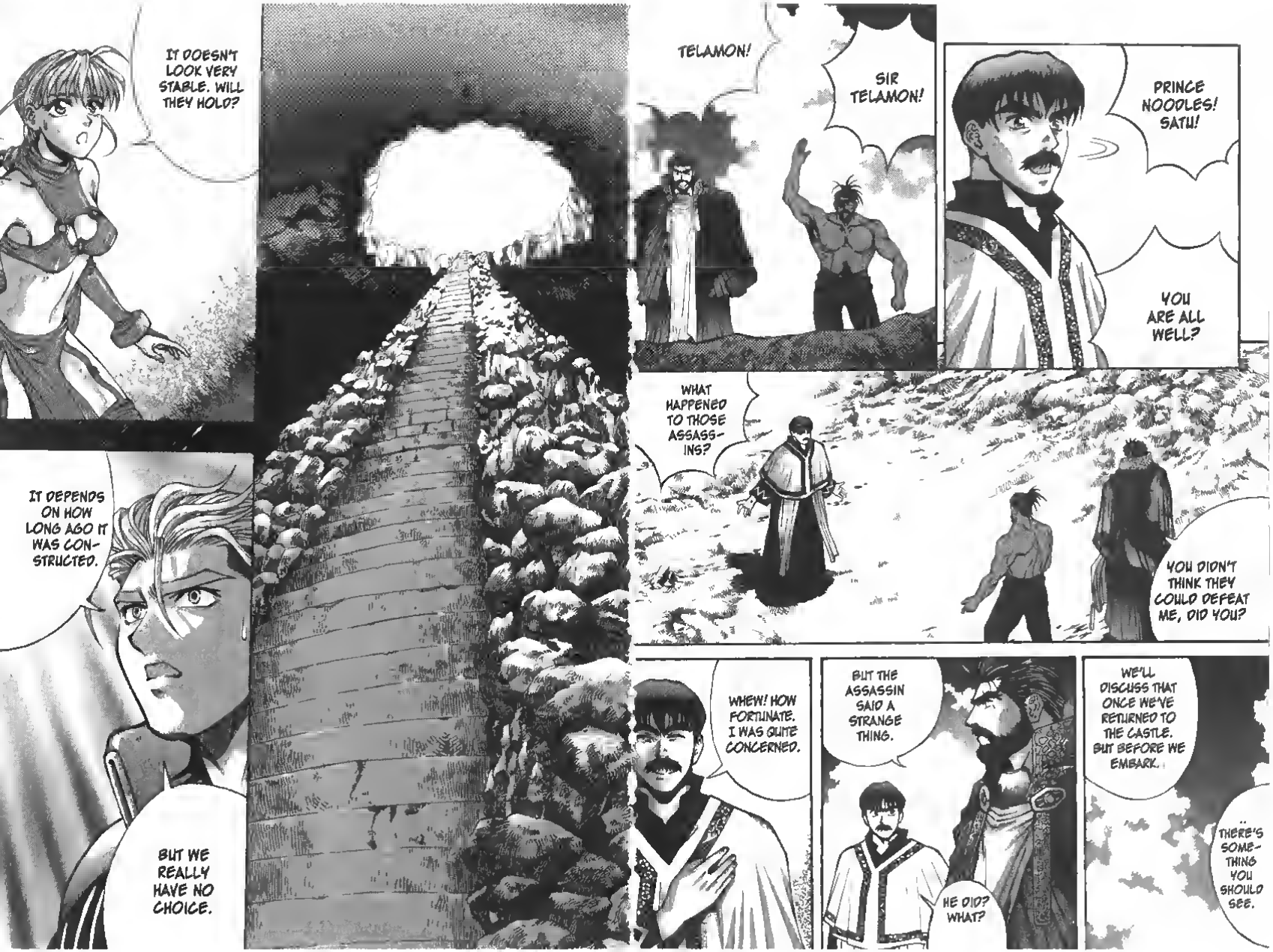

...I WILL LONG FOR THE DAY WHEN I'LL BE IN YOUR HEART, INSTEAD OF SINAN.

A WHOLE DAY HAS PASSED IN THAT SINGLE MOMENT.
OWW. MY WHOLE BODY IS SORE.
BUT IF I WANT TO CATCH UP WITH TELAMON, I'D BETTER KEEP MOVING.
OH!
I DIDN'T THINK I'D DRUNK THAT MUCH.
AH, THAT HITS THE SPOT.
HAH!

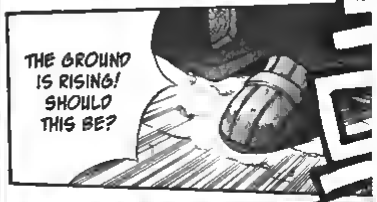
P-PRINCE NOODLES!
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'VE RUN INTO EACH OTHER OUT HERE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE!
SATU?
YOU SEEM WELL, PRINCE NOODLES! I WAS CONCERNED!
YOU'RE HERE TO WASH UP TOO, YES?
N-NO...I WAS JUST...
COME ON IN, THE WATER'S REALLY NICE.
I...I'M FINE! DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME!
I WAS ALSO WORRIED, SATU!
HA HA! I WAS JUST WASHING AND CLEANING MY WOUNDS.
WHEN I SENSED SOMEONE NEARBY, I THOUGHT IT WAS ANOTHER ASSASSIN.
YOU... YOU WERE TAKING A BATH?
HUH?
HUH? WHY ARE YOU ACTING SO STRANGELY? IS SOMETHING WRONG?
AH HA HA... IT'S NOTHING. NOTHING. AH HA...

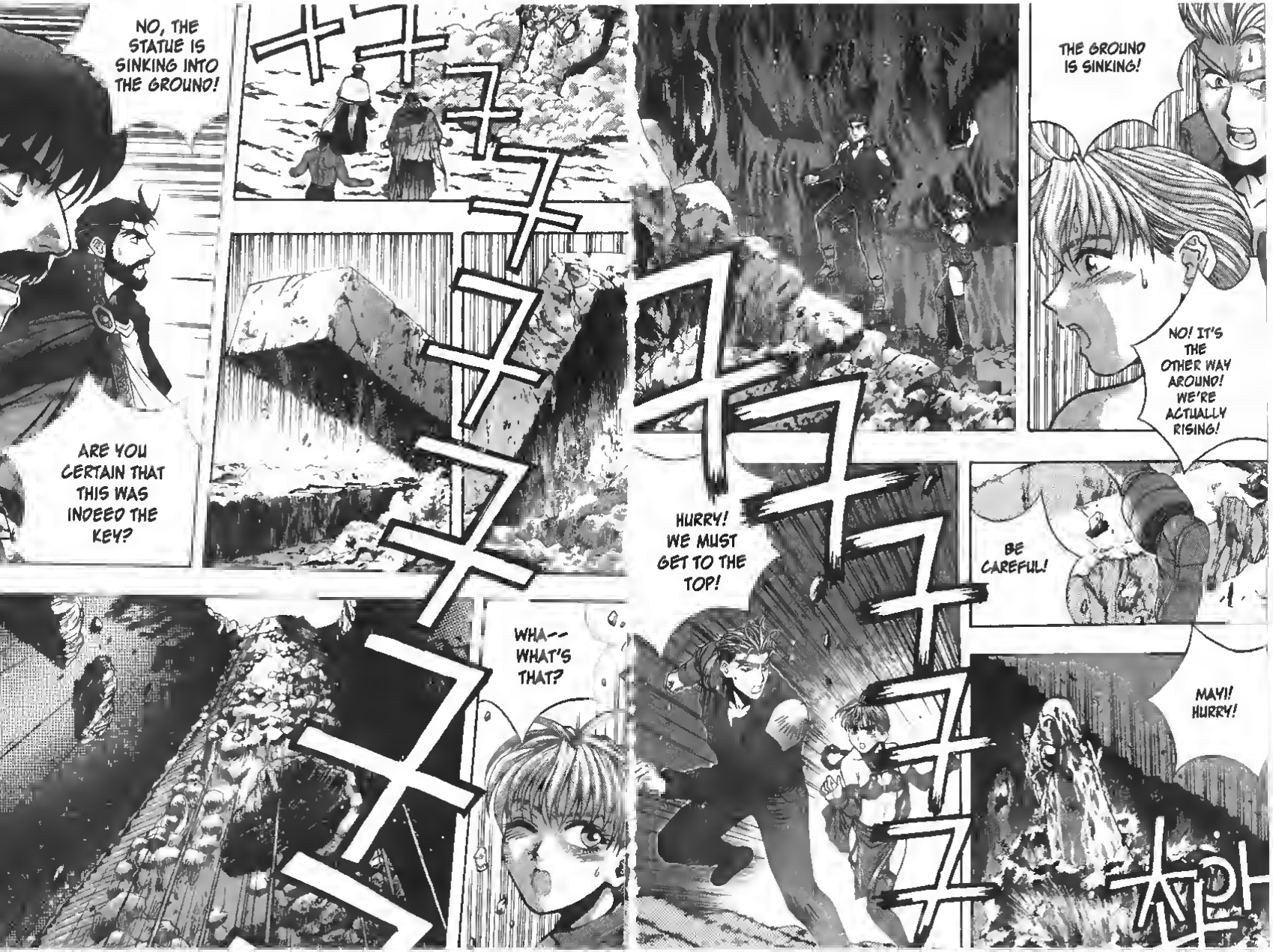
LIGHT...
IT'S SUNLIGHT! SUNLIGHT!
THAT MIGHT BE THE WAY OUT!

THIS IS... STRANGE.
THIS COULDN'T HAVE FORMED NATURALLY. THESE STAIRS WERE BUILT BY SOMEONE... BUT WHO?


IT DOESN'T LOOK VERY STABLE. WILL THEY HOLD?
IT DEPENDS ON HOW LONG AGO IT WAS CONSTRUCTED.
BUT WE REALLY HAVE NO CHOICE.
TELAMON!
SIR TELAMON!
PRINCE NOODLES! SATU!
YOU ARE ALL WELL?
WHAT HAPPENED TO THOSE ASSASSINS?
YOU DIDN'T THINK THEY COULD DEFEAT ME, DID YOU?
WHEW! HOW FORTUNATE. I WAS QUITE CONCERNED.
BUT THE ASSASSIN SAID A STRANGE THING.
HE DID? WHAT?
WE'LL DISCUSS THAT ONCE WE'VE RETURNED TO THE CASTLE. BUT BEFORE WE EMBARK,
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD SEE.

Pylos Gateway



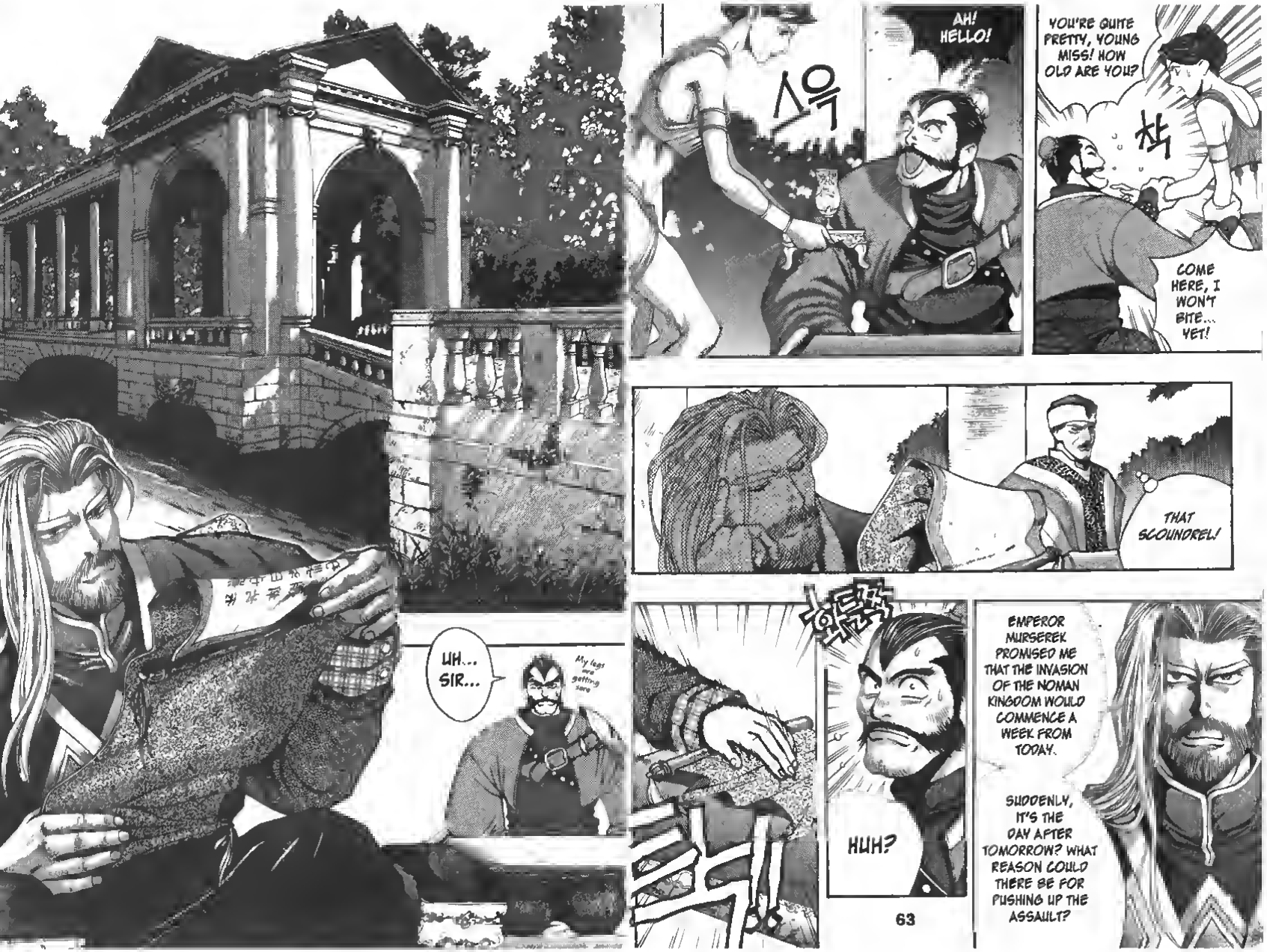

NO, THE STATUE IS SINKING INTO THE GROUND!
ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT THIS WAS INDEED THE KEY?
WHA-- WHAT'S THAT?
THE GROUND IS SINKING!
NO! IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND! WE'RE ACTUALLY RISING!
HURRY! WE MUST GET TO THE TOP!
BE CAREFUL!
MAYI! HURRY!

WHAT?!
S-SOME-THING'S RISING OUT OF THE SAND!
COULD THAT BE...?!

RED BLOOD

HEY!
스윽
HA HA HA HA!
휘리릭
HEH HEH HEH...THE PALACE LIFE IS ALWAYS SO LIVELY!
What

OH, THOSE ATTENDANTS ARE SO BEAUTIFUL!
WE'VE BEEN WAITING, ROYAL ENVOY OF MURSEREK.
OH! THERE YOU ARE!
YOU CAME A LONG WAY TO BE HERE.
HA HA HA HA. IT'S ALWAYS WORTH THE TRIP. YOU'VE AGED QUITE A BIT SINCE I LAST SAW YOU, MR. MINISTER!
타닷
SIR ZETSOS IS IN THE BACK GARDEN. LET ME GUIDE YOU THERE.


AH! HELLO!
YOU'RE QUITE PRETTY, YOUNG MISS! HOW OLD ARE YOU?
COME HERE, I WON'T BITE... YET!
THAT SCOUNDREL!
UH... SIR...
My feet are getting sore
HUH?
EMPEROR MURSEREK PROMISED ME THAT THE INVASION OF THE NOMAN KINGDOM WOULD COMMENCE A WEEK FROM TODAY.
SUDDENLY, IT'S THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW? WHAT REASON COULD THERE BE FOR PUSHING UP THE ASSAULT?

DON'T GET EXCITED, SIR ZETSOS. IT'S NO INSULT TO YOU. THERE WAS SIMPLY LESS TIME TO STAGE THE ATTACK THAN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT.
THE KINGDOM OF NOMAN REQUESTED HELP FROM THE KINGDOM OF ROMU ACROSS THE SEA TO DEFEND ITSELF.
WHY?
AND THOUGH DETAILS ARE SKETCHY, WE KNOW THE KINGDOM OF PRATRIA HAS FALLEN TO REBEL FORCES.
THE LEADER OF THE REBELS IS KNOWN TO BE YOUR BROTHER, NOODLES PYTHON. HE WAS THOUGHT TO BE DEAD THESE MANY YEARS...DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS?
NO...I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF MY BROTHER.
EMPEROR MURSEREK DECIDED THAT IF HE ATTACKS THE KINGDOM OF NOMAN AHEAD OF SCHEDULE, THEN HIS TROOPS WILL BE IN PLACE TO DEFEAT THE KINGDOM OF ROMU WHEN THEY ARRIVE.
THE SAME ROYAL ORDER HAS GONE OUT TO THE KINGDOM OF PAYCE, WHO HAS ALSO SWORN THEIR ALLEGIANCE.
YOU EXPECT US TO READY OUR TROOPS IN ONE DAY, THEN MARCH ON TO BATTLE?
THIS IS RIDI-CULOUS.
NEITHER CAN I BELIEVE THAT NOODLES IS ALIVE...BUT THE BATTLEFIELD DISPATCHES CANNOT BE IGNORED.
ONCE THE KINGDOM OF NOMAN HAS BEEN CONQUERED, THE ALLIANCE FORCES WILL ATTACK PRATRIA. EMPEROR MURSEREK WANTED YOU TO KNOW THIS.
WELL, THEN...
SIR ZETSOS, IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT YOUR TROOPS ARE UNEQUALLED IN POWER.
THEY CAN EASILY ROUT THE KINGDOM OF NOMAN, A BUNCH OF COWARDLY FOOLS.
NEED I REMIND YOU OF YOUR AGREEMENT MADE FIFTEEN YEARS AGO?
DON'T FORGET THAT EMPEROR MURSEREK BESTOWED THIS KINGDOM UPON YOU, SIR ZETSOS.

In the year 1454, when Zetsos rebelled against Pratria, Murserek lent him his forces, in return for Zetsos' allegiance for 30 years

OH, THERE IS ONE MORE THING!
I'M SUPPOSED TO MARCH WITH YOUR TROOPS AND MEET UP WITH THE ASSAULT FORCE IN THE KINGDOM OF NOMAN.
WH-WHAT?
IN THE MEAN-TIME, I'LL REMAIN HERE FOR TWO DAYS. LUCKY ME!
YOUR CASTLE IS BEAUTIFUL, AND THE COURT LADIES ARE ALL VERY... HOSPIT-ABLE.
THERE WAS A BUG ON YOUR SHOULDER.
ER...YES. THANK YOU.
THERE ARE MANY POISON-OUS INSECTS IN THIS GARDEN, BE CAREFUL.
HUH?
AS YOU'RE THE ROYAL ENVOY OF MURSEREK, SOME INSURGENTS MAY BE AFTER YOUR HEAD. I'LL HAVE A MILITARY ESCORT FOR YOU AT ALL TIMES.
SO WHY DON'T YOU GO INSIDE AND RELAX? I'LL SEND ATTENDANTS TO LOOK AFTER YOU.
THESE ARE ATTENDANTS THAT I MYSELF AM FOND OF. SO ENJOY YOUR-SELF.
The sky seems to sound with joy
THANK YOU! THANK YOU SO MUCH!

SIR ZETSOS...
YES, I'M AWARE OF MURSEREK'S PLOT.
PERHAPS I HAVEN'T SHOWN MY CLAWS IN TOO LONG A TIME.
THEN I SHALL PREPARE.
HE WISHES OUR MEN TO JOIN THE BATTLE AFTER A TIRING MARCH. THEIR MORALE WILL BE LOW.
AND WHEN THEY ARE SUBSEQUENTLY WEAK IN BATTLE, I WILL BE HELD TO BLAME.
MURSEREK HAS NO REASON TO ATTACK NOMAN. THAT MEANS THIS IS A TRAP.
THE EMPEROR HAS HIS EYE ON OUR KINGDOM OF MEZZOKISON.
THAT OLD BARBARIAN'S DREAMS ARE TOO BIG.
I'LL CRUSH THAT OLD MAN'S DREAM, BIT BY BIT.
NOODLES IS ALIVE, EH...?

MY BROTHER STILL LIVES-- DOUBTLESS BURNING WITH THE FIRE OF REVENGE.
AND BURNING WITH THE DESIRE TO KILL ME...
I'LL GIVE YOU MURSEREK'S HEAD IN THREE DAYS. IN THREE DAYS...
NOW HE HAS TWO DAYS LEFT.
IN TWO DAYS I STAND BEFORE MURSEREK.
ARE THE GODS HELPING ME, OR USHERING ME TO DESTRUCTION?
TRA LA LA LA HA.
THEY CALL ZETSOS "THE TIGER KING"? WHAT NONSENSE!
HE ACTS MAJESTIC, BUT HE SPENDS TOO MUCH TIME CURRYING FAVORS WITH ENVOYS-- NOT THAT I'M COMPLAINING!
SIRE, IT IS SIR ZETSOS' WISH THAT I ATTEND YOU.
HELLO, BABY!
W-WAIT JUST A MINUTE!
OH, DON'T FLATTER ME SO. YOU'LL EMBARRASS ME.
GET OUT!
VANISH. DO YOU HEAR?

SO THIS IS ONE OF THE NEOPTOLEMOS... ONE OF THE SIX CREATORS OF WAR.
I HAD THOUGHT IT WOULD BE ARMOR, OR SOME HOLY SWORD. PERHAPS AN INVINCIBLE WARRIOR, SEALED AWAY AGES AGO.
WHY THIS USELESS PIECE OF STONE? HOW IS THIS A CREATOR OF WAR?

OW!
OW,OW, OW...!
HEY!
WILL YOU HURRY UP? THIS THING IS REALLY HEAVY!

...
tremble tremble
UNNNH...

WHEW! I THOUGHT WE WERE GONERS FOR A MINUTE.
OH!

LOOK, SCOTT! THE SKY! WE'RE OUTSIDE THE CAVE!

HUH?

PRINCE NOODLES! UP THERE!

SCOTT? MAY!?
NOODLES, SATU, TELAMON! ALL OF YOU?

THEY'RE SAFE. THAT'S FOETUNATE. BUT WHERE'S SINAN?
SCOTT! COME ON! NOW WE CAN RETURN TO THE CASTLE!
WHEW! I'M TIRED. I'M GOING TO REST A LITTLE BIT, AND THEN HEAD DOWN.
YES, REST... FOR JUST A LITTLE WHILE.

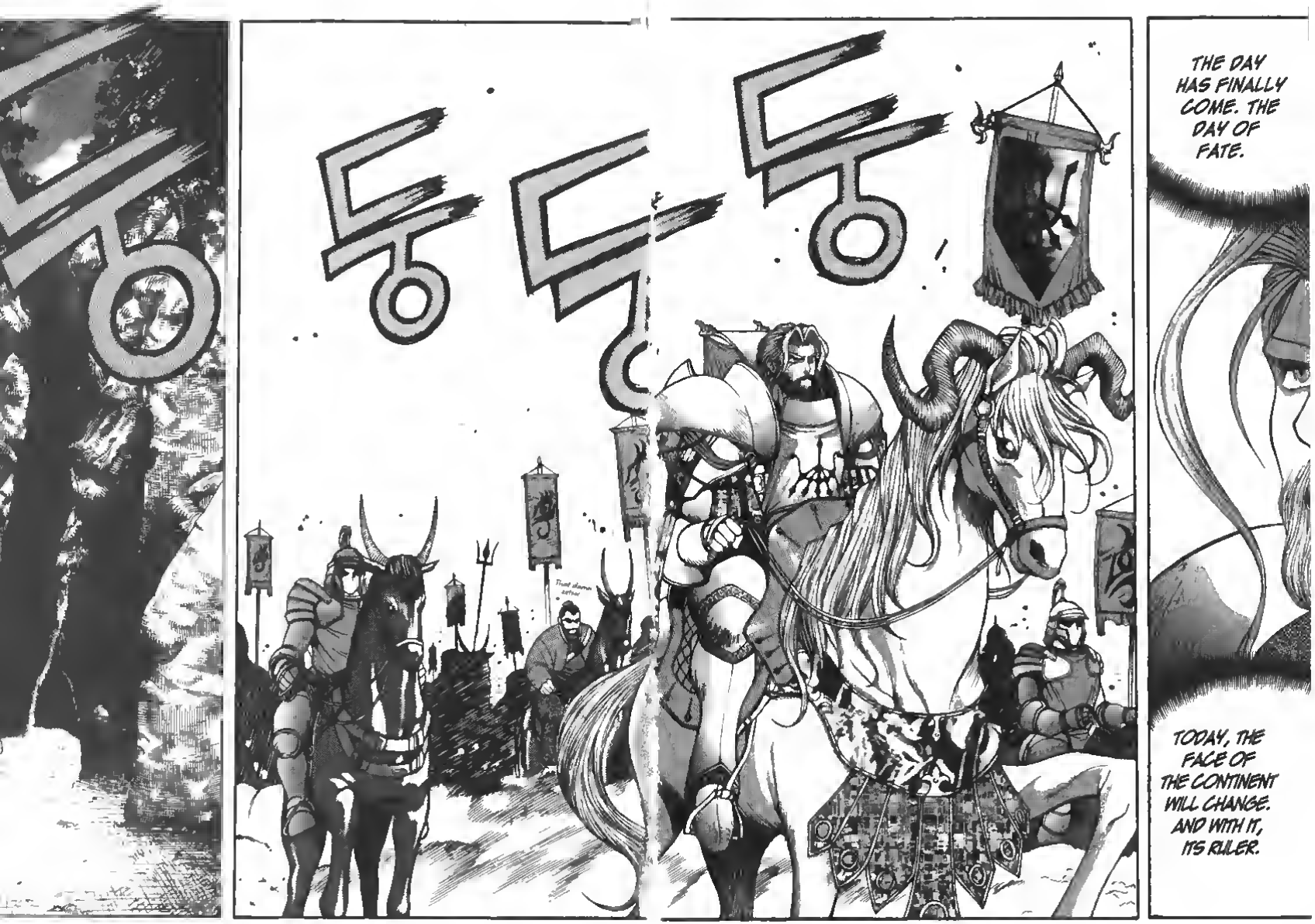
UNHH...
MAYI...?

I HAD A STRANGE DREAM.
YOU DIED, AND AN OLD FRIEND WAS TRYING TO KILL ME...
YES, YES. YOUR FEVER'S BROKEN-- YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT.
확
?!
와락!
I LOVE YOU, MAYI.
I DON'T KNOW WHY I WASN'T ABLE TO TELL YOU UNTIL NOW.

How embarrassing.

S-BUT MAYI...
...WHEN DID YOU GROW A BEARD?
SINCE ABOUT 1427 OR SO.
...
AGGGH!
I didn't think it was that surprising.
벌떡
WH-WHO ARE YOU?
And who hugged who first?/
I'LL ASK THE QUESTIONS! I SAVED YOUR LIFE!
MY LIFE...?
MY NAME IS HECTOR. I AM A VAGABOND.
That punk doesn't know when to be thankful
I FOUND YOU BY THE RIVER. IT WAS AMAZING YOU WERE STILL ALIVE. YOU DIDN'T WAKE UP FOR THREE DAYS.

THE RIVER...?
YOU'RE PROBABLY HUNGRY. I MADE SOUP.
OKAY ...
I'M GOING TO DIG UP SOME HERBAL REMEDIES. DON'T MOVE AROUND. YOUR CHEST WOUND IS QUITE LARGE.
LET'S GO, BRI.
POO
THEN WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR WAS...
반짝!!
OH, ONE MORE THING...
YOU WERE CALLING FOR A MAY! IN YOUR SLEEP.
H-HUH?
What are you talking about?
HOW'S HER BODY? FULL, PERKY BREASTS?
I LIKE A SLIM WAIST. AND LONG, LONG LEGS.
SHE'S YOUR LOVER, HUH? HOW OLD IS SHE?
DOES SHE HAVE A PRETTY FACE? DOES SHE HAVE LONG, SHINY HAIR?
HAVE YOU SLEPT WITH HER? THE BEST WOMEN ARE MOST GORGEOUS AT NIGHT, IF YOU GET WHAT I MEAN.
Hmm
NO! WE'RE NOT LIKE THAT!
IS THAT RIGHT?
WELL THEN, IF SHE'S NOT YOUR LOVER, YOU WON'T MIND INTRODUCING ME TO HER.
I'LL BE BACK. YOU THINK IT OVER.
THAT OLD FOSSIL HAS A DIRTY MIND.


THE DAY HAS FINALLY COME. THE DAY OF FATE.
TODAY, THE FACE OF THE CONTINENT WILL CHANGE. AND WITH IT, ITS RULER.

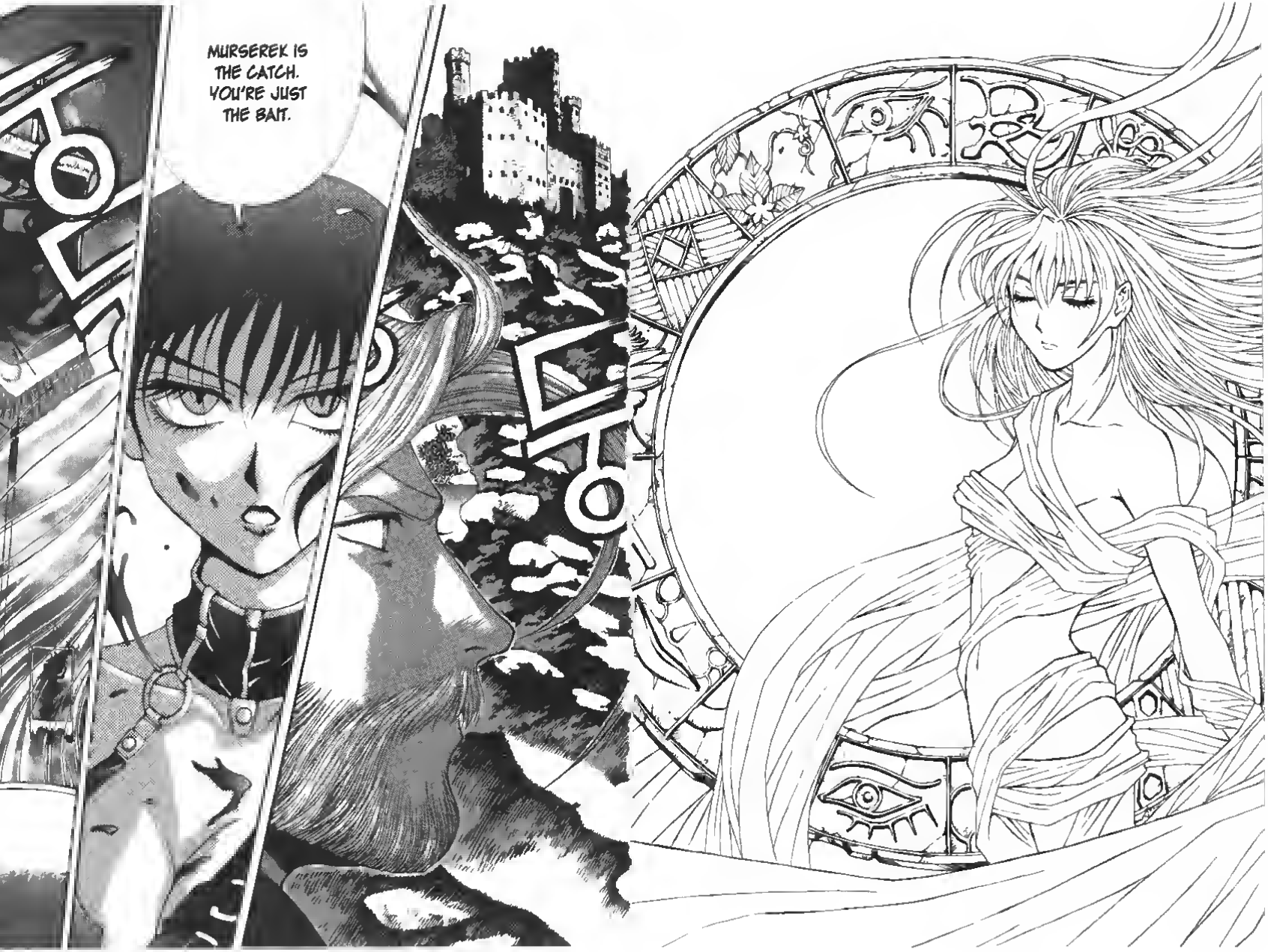
ZETSOS' TROOPS ARE FINALLY MOVING. BUT...
WHAT'S THIS? WHAT I FEEL FROM HIM...
IT'S AS THOUGH WE SHARE THE SAME BLOOD. LIKE WE'RE FAMILY. BUT THAT CAN'T--
MINTE, MY LOVE...
WHAT ARE YOU PONDER-ING SO INTENTLY?
N-NOTHING.
HMM. DO YOU SMELL THAT?
SMELLS LIKE A RAINSTORM BREWING. WE'D BEST BE GOING.

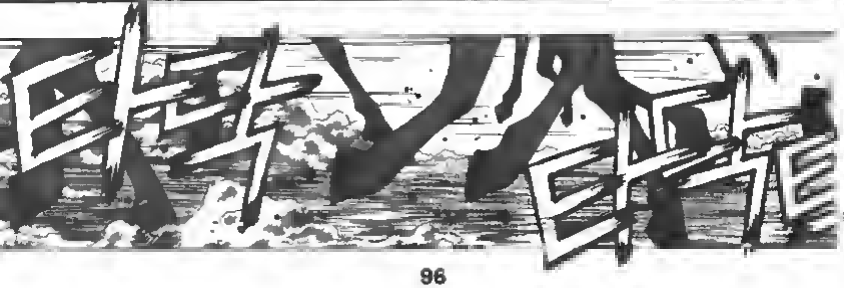
Supply Depot for Murserek's military campaign
LOOKS LIKE RAIN. THE BATTLE'S GOING TO BE DIFFICULT.
NOT FOR US, IT'S NOT.

ALL WE DO IS DELIVER SUPPLIES. WHATEVER HAPPENS DOWN THERE DOESN'T CONCERN US.
WITH BOTH ZETSOS' FORCES AND MURSEREK'S, TAKING OVER THE KINGDOM OF NOMAN WILL BE SIMPLE.
THE EMPEROR IS NOT A FOOL. VICTORY WAS OURS BEFORE HE EVEN STARTED THIS WAR, EH?
HEY, SOMEONE'S COMING.
HEY, YOU DOWN THERE! WHAT DO YOU WANT?

TIME TO GO TO WORK, MINTE.
HEY, BALDY! I ASKED YOU A QUESTION!
YOU'VE GOT SOME NERVE! DON'T YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE?
YOU CAN TAKE OVER HERE. I'LL GO IN FIRST. FOLLOW WHEN YOU'RE READY.
TOO STUPID EVEN TO RUN AWAY, HUH?

HUH?
I'M VERY SORRY.
AGGGH!
H-HE'S HEADING FOR THE FORTIFICA-TION!
HEY, BIG BOY! YOU'RE LOOKING THE WRONG WAY.
WHAT ARE YOU--?


MURSEREK IS THE CATCH. YOU'RE JUST THE BAIT.


EH
EH

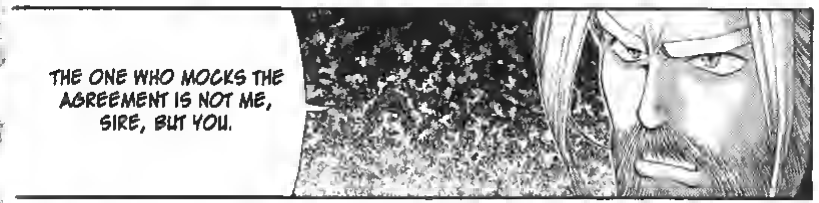
WELL, ZETSOS' FORCES ARE HERE. THE MAIH ASSAULT FORCE HAS ARRIVED.
THEY'VE GOT THIS THING WON ALL BY THEMSELVES. WHY DID WE HAVE TO LEAVE OUR KINGDOM OF PAYCE?

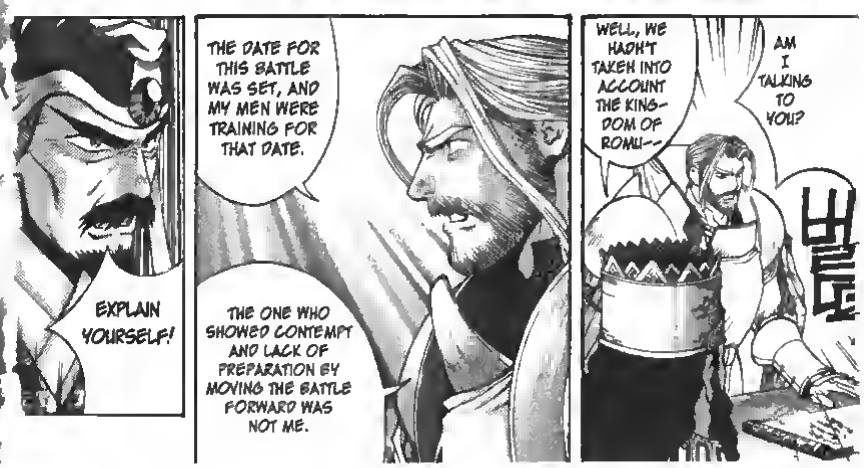
"ALL BY THEMSELVES"? THERE ARE ONLY ABOUT A HUNDRED OF THEM!
THAT'S IT!
AND WHY DO WE NEED CAVALRY? WE'RE ASSAULTING A CASTLE!

WE NEED MORE FOOT SOLDIERS LIKE US.
ZETSOS' TROOPS HAVEN'T BEEN DEFEATED IN OVER TEN YEARS!

HOW GOES THE BATTLE?
Murserek VI
Ascended to the throne in 1442, became the Commanding Chief of the three alliance countries and took over half the continent when he conquered Pratria through aiding Zetsos Zetsos is his ally, but Murserek has no heir, so he never turns his back on the former Pratrian Prince.
Timar III The king of Payce, a minor nation

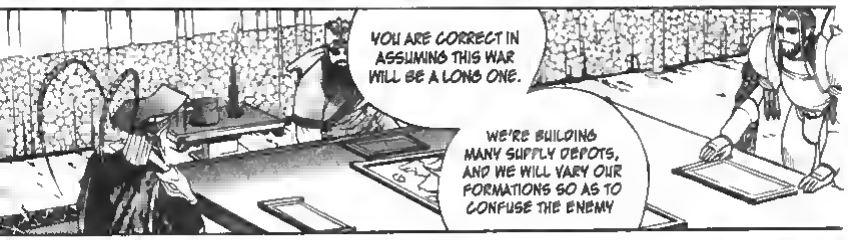
YOU HAVE BROUGHT ONLY A HUNDRED MEN TO ATTACK THIS KINGDOM, WHILE I'VE BROUGHT WELL OVER FIVE THOUSAND.
A TIGER USES ALL HIS MEANS, EVEN WHEN HE HUNTS A LONE RABBIT.
DO YOU MOCK THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN US, OR DO YOU SIMPLY HAVE CONTEMPT FOR ME?

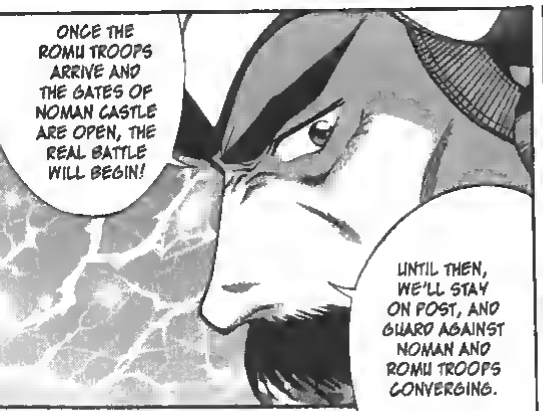

THE ONE WHO MOCKS THE AGREEMENT IS NOT ME, SIRE, BUT YOU.

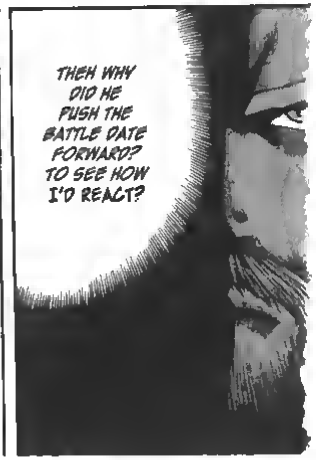

EXPLAIN YOURSELF!
THE DATE FOR THIS BATTLE WAS SET, AND MY MEN WERE TRAINING FOR THAT DATE.
THE ONE WHO SHOWED CONTEMPT AND LACK OF PREPARATION BY MOVING THE BATTLE FORWARD WAS NOT ME.
WELL, WE HADN'T TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE KINGDOM OF ROMU--
AM I TALKING TO YOU?

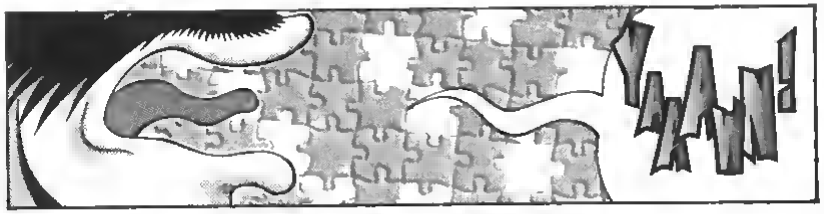
LOOK AT THE KINGDOM OF NOMAN.
THEIR FORTRESS IS PROTECTED NATURALLY BY HARSH TERRAIN.
WITH THE RIVER BEHIND THEM, ATTACKING FROM THE REAR IS IMPOSSIBLE. HENCE, WE MUST APPROACH THROUGH THIS NARROW PASSAGE WITH A SMALL ASSAULT FORCE.
I DID NOT REQUEST A LECTURE ON TACTICS! I ASK AGAIN... WHY DID YOU BRING ONLY A HUNDRED MEN?
I THOUGHT THIS WAR MIGHT BE A LONG ONE. HENCE, I BROUGHT ONLY THE VANGUARDS, MY BEST MEN.
TWO DAYS FROM NOW, MY MAIN FORCE OF EIGHT THOUSAND WILL ARRIVE, BEFORE THE KINGDOM OF ROMU'S TROOPS CAN GET HERE.
BUT THE NOMAN TROOPS WON'T KNOW OUR REINFORCEMENTS ARE ON THE WAY. THEY'LL HAVE NO WAY TO WARN THE ROMU TROOPS.
IF WE ALSO SEEK TO CONQUER ROMU, WE CAN DESTROY BOTH FORCES AT ONCE. WE CAN USE OUR FULL FORCE AGAINST THE MASSED MIGHT OF NOMAN AND ROMU.
THEY'RE GOING TO CONCENTRATE THEIR EFFORTS ON DEFENDING THE CASTLE!
THEY'LL HOLD US OFF OUTSIDE WHILE WE WAIT FOR REINFORCEMENTS.
AND DURING THAT WAIT, SHOULD THEIR ALLY, THE KINGDOM OF ROMU, ASSAULT US FROM THE SIDES...
YOU'RE SAYING... THAT THEY'RE PREPARED FOR OUR ATTACK? LURING US FORWARD SO ROMU'S FORCES CAN SURROUND US?
HMMM...THEN THE TROOPS THAT COME NOW ARE SIMPLY TO SATISFY THE LETTER OF OUR AGREEMENT, EH? AND DECEIVE THE TROOPS OF NOMAN?
HM HM HM...
A MAIN ASSAULT FORCE OF EIGHT THOUSAND MEN...

BY THE NAME OF THE NEOPTOLEMOS, YOU ARE A GREAT GENERAL!
HA HA HA!


YOU ARE CORRECT IN ASSUMING THIS WAR WILL BE A LONG ONE.
WE'RE BUILDING MANY SUPPLY DEPOTS, AND WE WILL VARY OUR FORMATIONS SO AS TO CONFUSE THE ENEMY


ONCE THE ROMU TROOPS ARRIVE AND THE GATES OF NOMAN CASTLE ARE OPEN, THE REAL BATTLE WILL BEGIN!
UNTIL THEN, WE'LL STAY ON POST, AND GUARD AGAINST NOMAN AND ROMU TROOPS CONVERGING.


THEN WHY DID HE PUSH THE BATTLE DATE FORWARD? TO SEE HOW I'D REACT?


YAAAN!

OH, SOOO BORRRRING!

THERE'S NO ONE HERE BUT MEN. NOT A SINGLE WOMAN FOR MILES!
I SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN THE CASTLE.

WE'RE LIKE, A PERFECT MATCH FOR EACH OTHER.

NO! BETTER TO BE HERE THAN THERE WITH HER!
AKKKK!

AH
HUH?

WH-
WHAT'S
THIS?

OVER
THERE? TO
THE EAST?

HEY, ARE
YOU ALL
RIGHT? DO
YOU NEED A
DOCTOR?
THE
COMMANDER!
QUICKLY...
GET THE
COMMANDER!

WHAT IS THIS
DISTURBANCE?

WHO DID
THIS? WAS IT A
SURPRISE ATTACK
BY THE KINGDOM
OF NOMAN?
THE KINGDOM
OF ROMU
CANNOT HAVE
ARRIVED YET!

IT WAS
NEITHER
NOMAN NOR
ROMU.
THERE
WERE
ONLY
TWO OF
THEM!

THE SUPPLY
DEPOT... THE
FIRST SUPPLY
DEPOT HAS BEEN
OVERTAKEN!
OUR SUPPLY
DEPOT?!

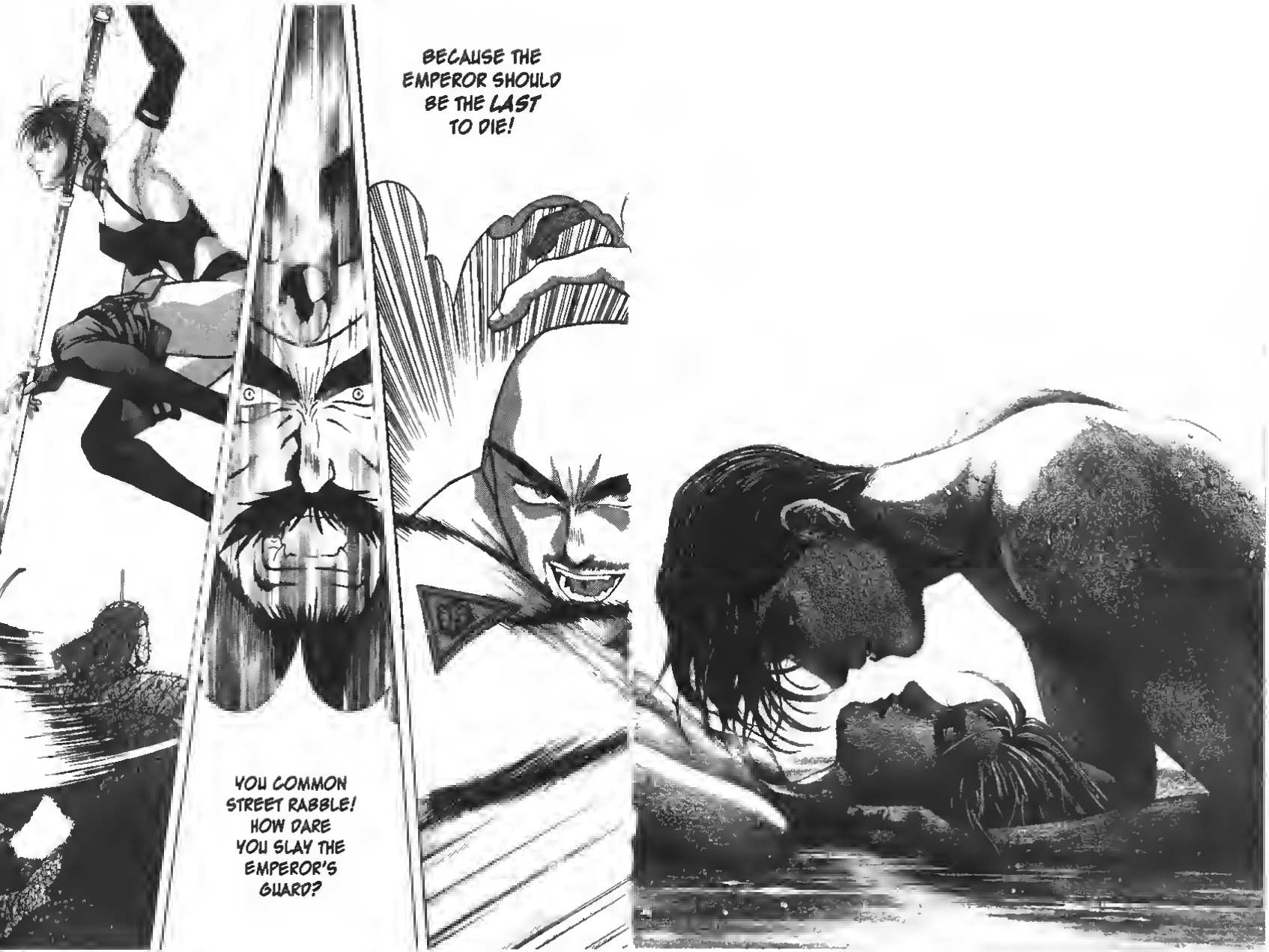
WHAT?
ONLY TWO
SOLDIERS?

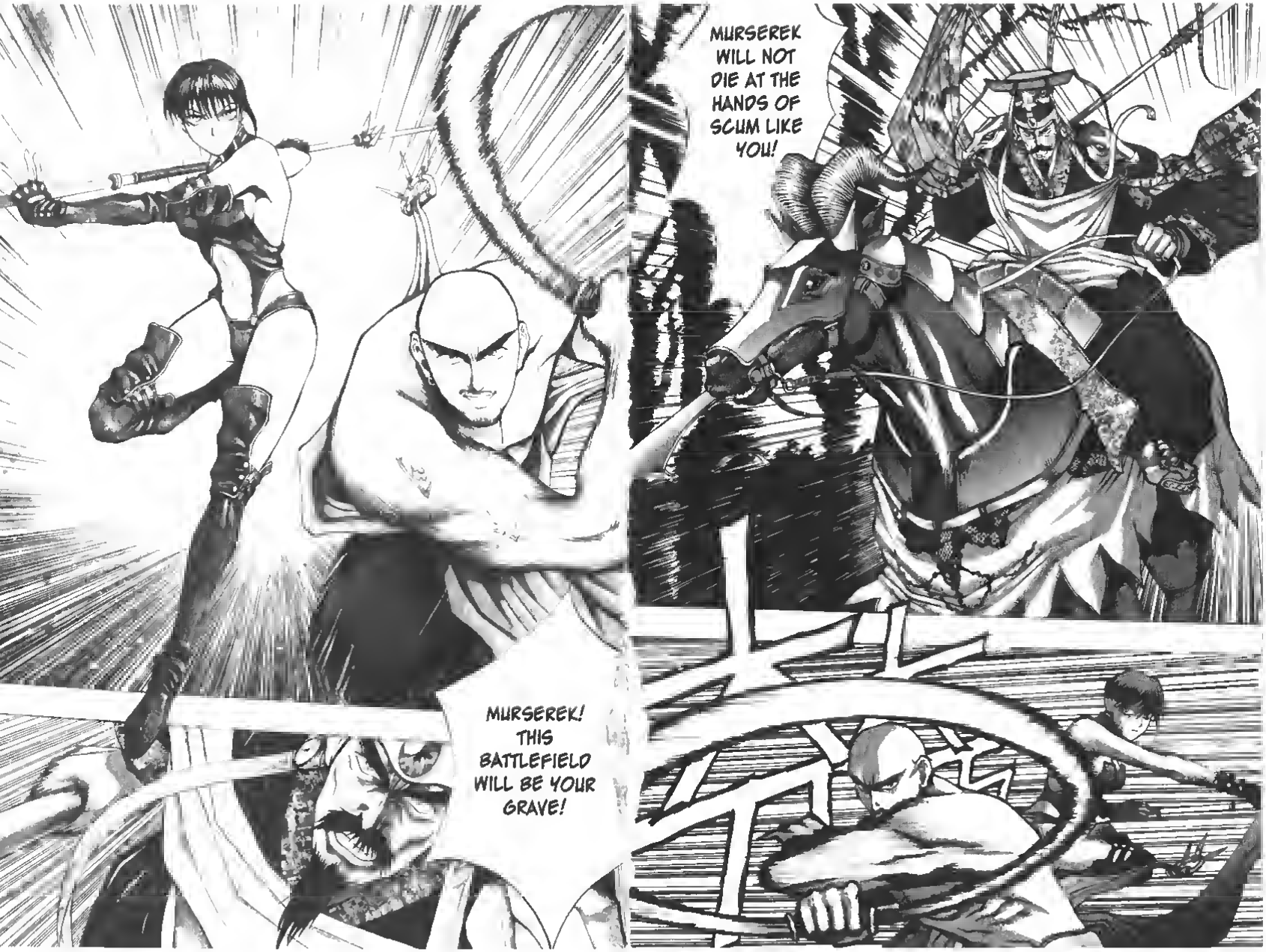
TWO OF
THEM?
COULD IT
BE?

THEY WEREN'T SOLDIERS! THEY BURST IN LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING.
NO! HOW COULD EIGHTY OF MY TROOPS BE SLAUGHTERED BY ONLY TWO PEOPLE?
AGGH!
FOLLOW ME!
GUARDS! FOLLOW ME! I'LL LEAD YOU THERE MYSELF!
ZETSOS! STAND POSITION HERE! THIS MAY BE A DIVERSION FOR A SNEAK ASSAULT!
IF IT WAS PANTERA, WE'LL ALL HAVE OUR HANDS FULL SOON ENOUGH.
SOLDIER, TELL THE MEDICS TO ATTEND--
SLAY HIM! TO TREAT HIM WILL TAKE TOO MUCH TIME!
SLAY HIM?
Just like that?
WE CAN'T HAVE ANY WOUNDED MEN HOLDING US BACK!

그르르릉
쏴아아아아
RAIN! A SOLDIER'S WORST ENEMY!
번쩍
WHO'S THIS?

WHO ARE YOU? I COMMAND YOU TO ANSWER!
EH EK
YOU'RE AS IMPATIENT AS THEY SAY, YOUR MAJESTY. WE ARE NEVERTHELESS HONORED BY YOUR VISIT!
BUT WE'D MUCH PREFER TO TALK TO YOU ALONE.

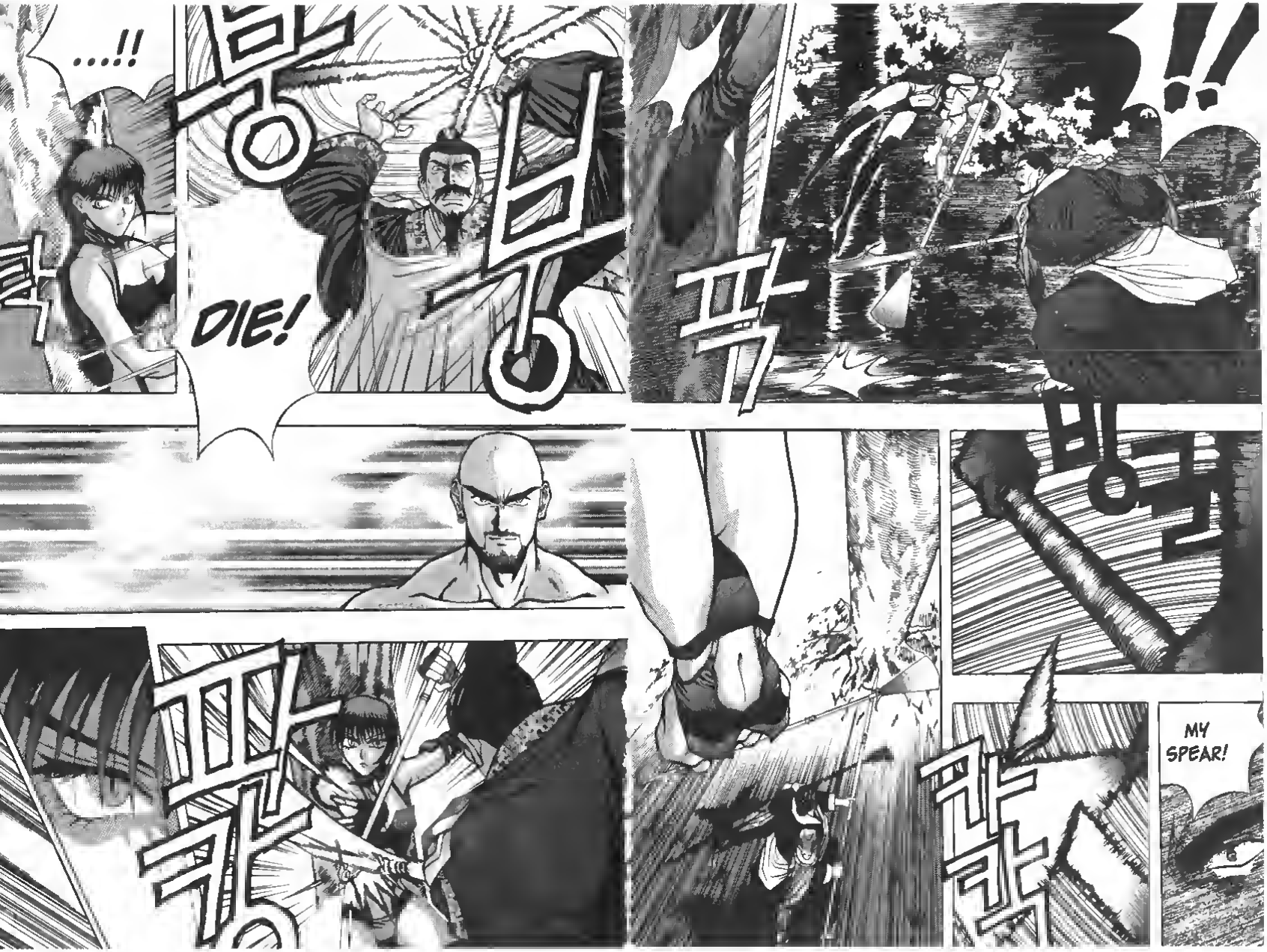

BECAUSE THE EMPEROR SHOULD BE THE LAST TO DIE!
YOU COMMON STREET RABBLE! HOW DARE YOU SLAY THE EMPEROR'S GUARD?


MURSEREK WILL NOT DIE AT THE HANDS OF SCUM LIKE YOU!
MURSEREK! THIS BATTLEFIELD WILL BE YOUR GRAVE!

UNGH!
...!!
UNNH!
!!

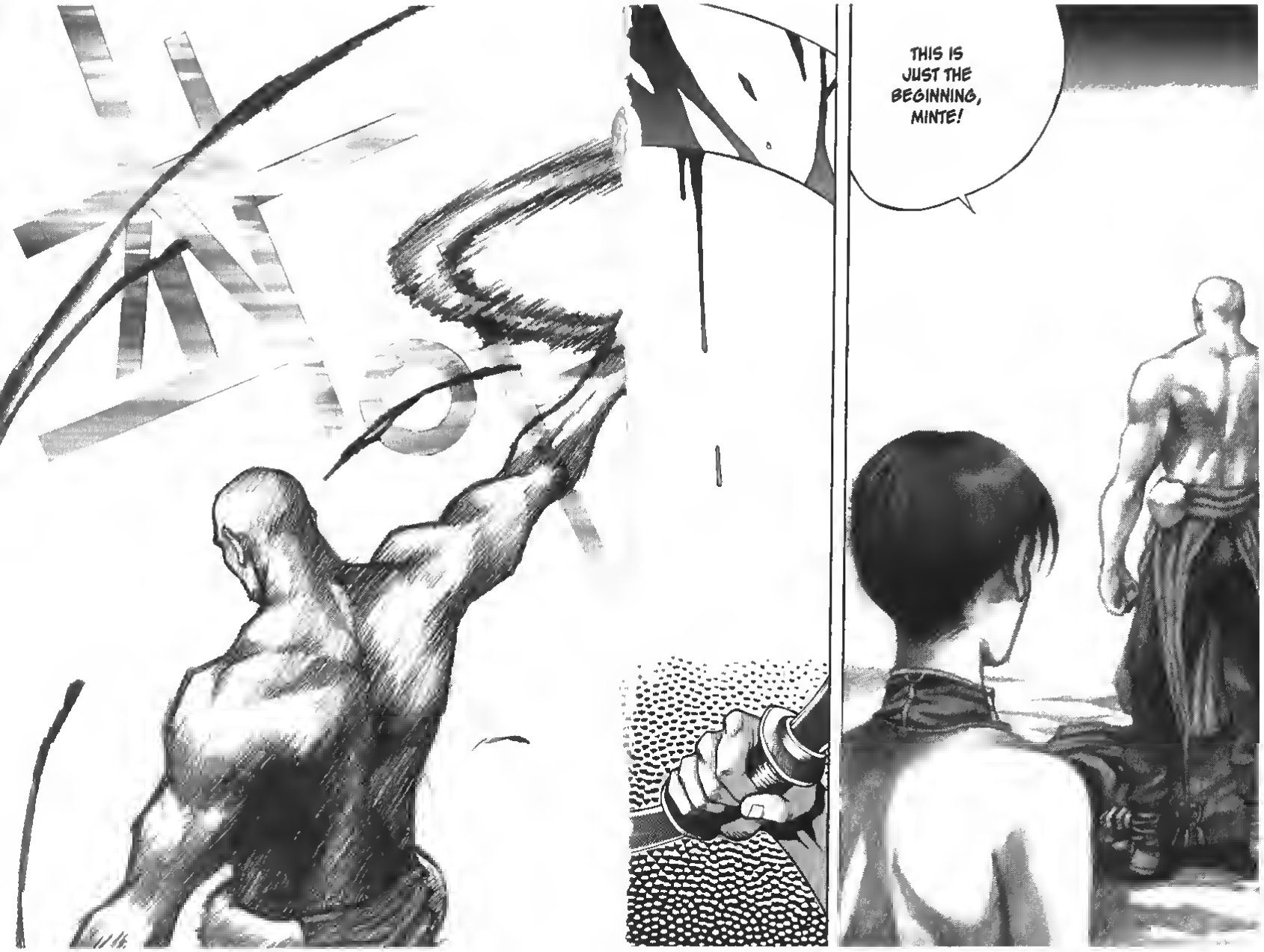
GGH!
WHO ARE YOU RABBLE? WHO DARE ORDERS YOU TO ATTACK ME, EMPEROR MURSEREK?
I BOW TO NO ONE. I HAD MY OWN REASONS.
W-WHAT?
THIS CONTINENT WILL BE UNITED, BUT WITH ZETSOS COMMANDING YOUR FORCES, NOT YOU.
ZETSOS?
YOUR SKILLS ARE FAR FROM WHAT RUMORS SAY THEM TO BE.
DO YOUR BATTLE SKILLS DECLINE AS YOUR AGE INCREASES? DO I HAVE THAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO AS WELL?
THE MIGHTY EMPEROR HASN'T FIGURED IT OUT YET?
ZETSOS' FORCES ARE LOYAL TO HIM, NOT TO YOU. THEY'RE REBELS WHO WOULD JUST AS SOON KILL YOU.

?!
BUT ZETSOS KNEW I'D CLAIM YOUR DEATH FOR MYSELF.
I'M SURE HE SURROUNDED US WITH HIS MEN, JUST TO MAKE SURE YOU COULDN'T ESCAPE.
YOU WERE TO BE THE FIRST PERSON CONQUERED TODAY, YOUR MAJESTY.
MERCENARY DOG...
...DO YOU THINK I BECAME EMPEROR WITHOUT GETTING BLOOD ON MY OWN BLADE?
NO. I WAS COUNTING ON QUITE THE OPPOSITE.
스윽
퍼엉
촤아

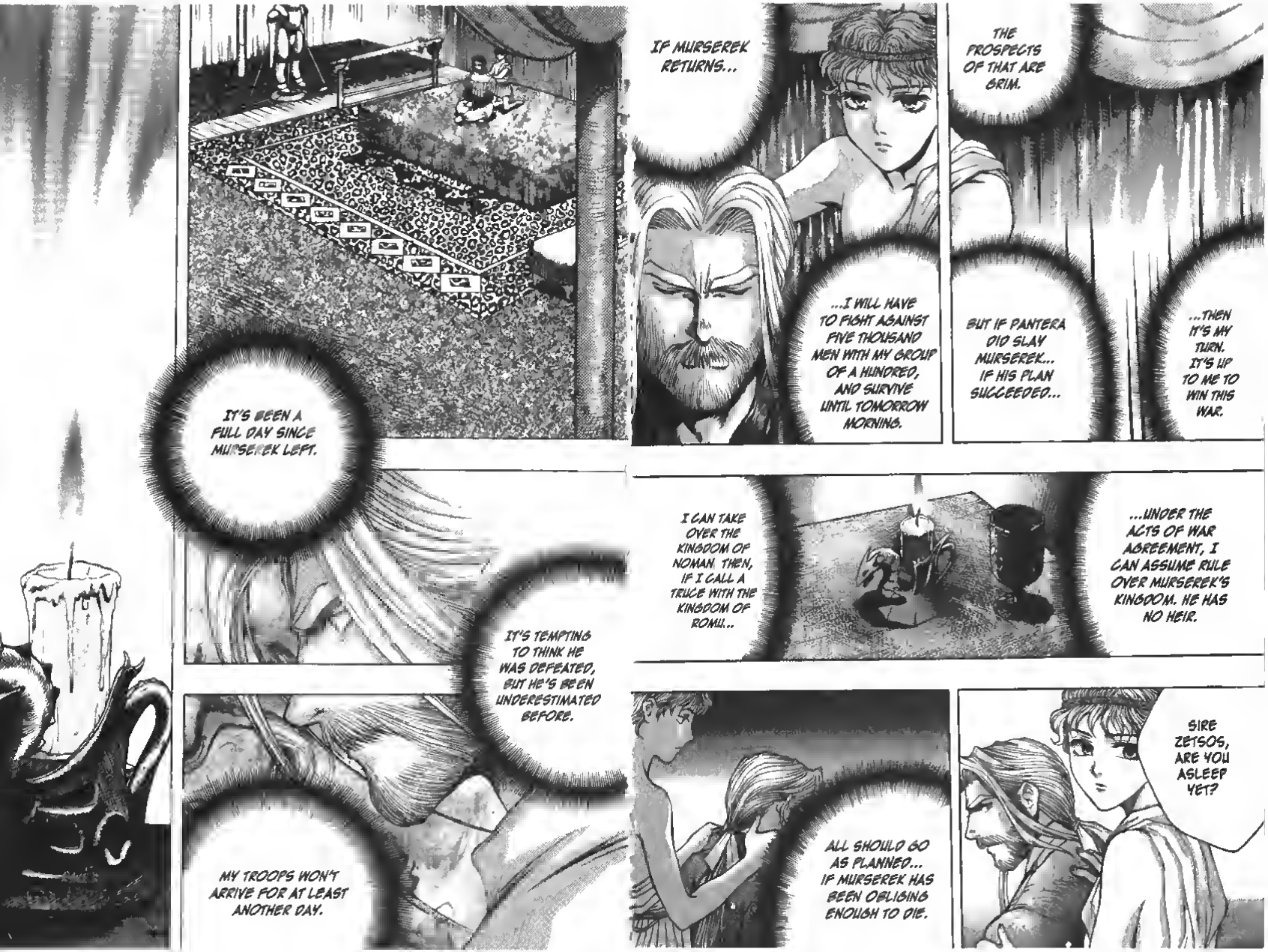

...!!
DIE!
!!
MY SPEAR!

AIEE
SLICE
UNGH-!
NNGG!
AGGH!
ZETSOS... YOU...YOU... TRAITOR...

...
BETTER MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR GODS. YOU'LL SEE THEM SOON ENOUGH
ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT THE FIRES OF WAR BURN. ALL MILITARY POWER WILL FALL TO ZETSOS IF THE CHIEF COMMANDER DIES...
...OR RATHER, WHEN AND AS THE ARMY GOES, SO GOES THE COUNTRY.
YOU HAVE NO HEIR, SO ZETSOS WILL RULE YOUR COUNTRY AS EASILY AS HE RULES YOUR ARMY.
JUST AS YOU DID WHEN YOU CONQUERED PRATIA.
MY KINGDOM IS LARGER THAN ONE MAN, LARGER EVEN THAN ME. MY DEATH DOESN'T MEAN OUR BATTLE IS LOST.
YOU THINK NOT? THERE'S SO MUCH YOU DON'T KNOW.
IN A FEW DAYS, ZETSOS' MAIN FORCE WILL ARRIVE.
...?!
HOW DO YOU KNOW THIS?
AND THOUGH YOUR TROOPS' MORALE MAY FLOUNDER WITH YOUR DEATH, MORALE WILL RISE ANEW WHEN ZETSOS' TROOPS JOIN THEM.
ZETSOS IS TO LEAVE THIS BATTLE AS THE NEW CHIEF COMMANDER. HIS IS THE RISING STAR.
HA HA HA...
HA HA HA HA!
I'VE BEEN PLAYED FOR A FOOL! AND I DESERVE IT!
USURPING MY THRONE UNDER COVER OF WAR... I SALUTE YOU! BUT TELL ZETSOS HE'LL FIND THE OLD SAYING TO BE TRUE: THE EMPEROR MUST SLEEP WITH ONE EYE OPEN.
AND NOW IT'S TIME TO CLOSE YOURS.


THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING, MINTE!

RED BLOOD

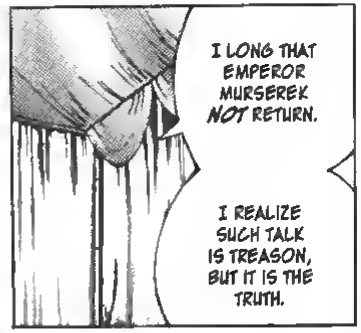

IF MURSEREK RETURNS...
...I WILL HAVE TO FIGHT AGAINST FIVE THOUSAND MEN WITH MY GROUP OF A HUNDRED, AND SURVIVE UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING.
THE PROSPECTS OF THAT ARE GRIM.
BUT IF PANTERA DID SLAY MURSEREK... IF HIS PLAN SUCCEEDED...
...THEN IT'S MY TURN. IT'S UP TO ME TO WIN THIS WAR.
IT'S BEEN A FULL DAY SINCE MURSEREK LEFT.
I CAN TAKE OVER THE KINGDOM OF NOMAN. THEN, IF I CALL A TRUCE WITH THE KINGDOM OF ROMU...
...UNDER THE ACTS OF WAR AGREEMENT, I CAN ASSUME RULE OVER MURSEREK'S KINGDOM. HE HAS NO HEIR.
IT'S TEMPTING TO THINK HE WAS DEFEATED, BUT HE'S BEEN UNDERESTIMATED BEFORE.
MY TROOPS WON'T ARRIVE FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER DAY.
ALL SHOULD GO AS PLANNED... IF MURSEREK HAS BEEN OBLIGING ENOUGH TO DIE.
SIRE ZETSOS, ARE YOU ASLEEP YET?

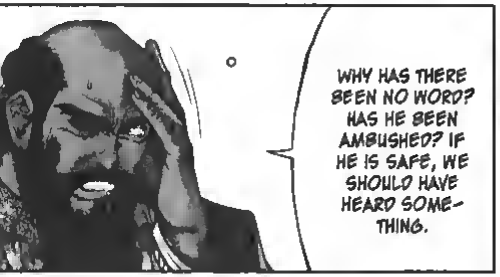
AH, SIRE TIMAR, PLEASE ENTER.

LEAVE US.

MURSEREK HASN'T RETURNED, AND I AM QUITE CONCERNED.

DOES IT? MAY I SPEAK FRANKLY, SIRE?
IF WE CAN BE CANDID, NOW THAT WE'RE ALONE...


I LONG THAT EMPEROR MURSEREK *NOT* RETURN.
I REALIZE SUCH TALK IS TREASON, BUT IT IS THE TRUTH.


WHY HAS THERE BEEN NO WORD? HAS HE BEEN AMBUSHED? IF HE IS SAFE, WE SHOULD HAVE HEARD SOMETHING.

WE'RE AH INSIGNIFICANT BORDER NATION, NO BETTER THAN A PARASITE TO HIM WE PAY TRIBUTE, YES, BUT WE OCCASIONALLY THREATEN TO SECEDE. WHEN WE DO, HE LAUGHS AT US.
I GRIN AND BEAR IT. HE CAN TAKE MY THRONE IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE, AND WE ALL KNOW IT.

YOU'RE A WARRIOR WHO HAS SURVIVED MUCH WORSE, AND I AM BUT A WEAK OLD MAN.
NONSENSE, TIMAR--YOUR CONCERN SPEAKS WELL OF YOU.

IS THIS OLD MAN REALLY THAT FEARFUL, OR IS HE TRYING TO DRAW ME OUT?

BUT THEN, HE PROBABLY DOESN'T SPEAK THAT WAY TO YOU. YOU'RE HIS SECOND-IN-COMMAND, AND YOU HAVE POWER OF YOUR OWN.

AND IF I MAY SPEAK FRANKLY...
...IF I CAN BE CANDID...

THE EMPEROR HOPED TO DISPOSE OF YOU IN THIS BATTLE. I OVERHEARD HIM SAY THIS. AT LEAST, I THINK I DID--

SO, IS HE TELLING THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT HE THINKS IS THE TRUTH? OR --

SIR ZETSOS! THERE'S A PROBLEM OUT HERE, SIR!
꽈

THE EMPEROR IS--!
WHAT? IS WHAT?

NOW WE'LL KNOW!

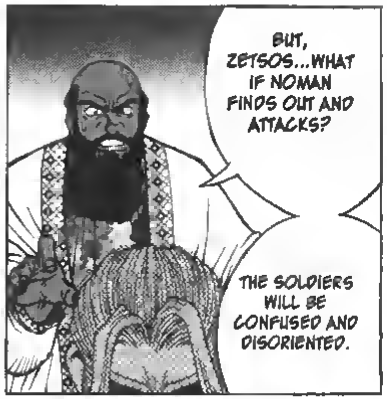
ONE SIDE, EVERYONE!
MAKE ROOM, MAKE ROOM!

타닥
타닥
타닥

MURSEREK!
BE CAREFUL!
IT MIGHT BE A TRAP!
UM...
GULP!

AAGGH!
WELL, WHAT IS IT?
IT... IT'S A HEAD!
IT'S THE EMPEROR'S HEAD!
AAAH!
OH MY GOD!
SUCCESS!
IF THE KING IS DEAD, THEN WHO'S GOING TO--?
IF NOMAN LEARNS OF THIS, THEY'LL ATTACK! WE'LL BE SLAUGHTERED!
THERE'S A DEVIL AT THE SUPPLY DEPOT! ANYONE WHO GOES THERE DIES!
SILENCE, EVERYONE!

WE CANNOT HOLD A FUNERAL DURING BATTLE, SO AS SOON AS THE DAY DAWNS, WE'LL MOVE THE KING'S BODY TO THE CAPITAL.


BUT, ZETSOS... WHAT IF NOMAN FINDS OUT AND ATTACKS?
THE SOLDIERS WILL BE CONFUSED AND DISORIENTED.

THAT'S WHAT I'M HOPING FOR.

I'VE GIVEN MY ORDERS! GUARDS, RETURN TO YOUR POSTS! AND TREAT THE EMPEROR'S BODY WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT!

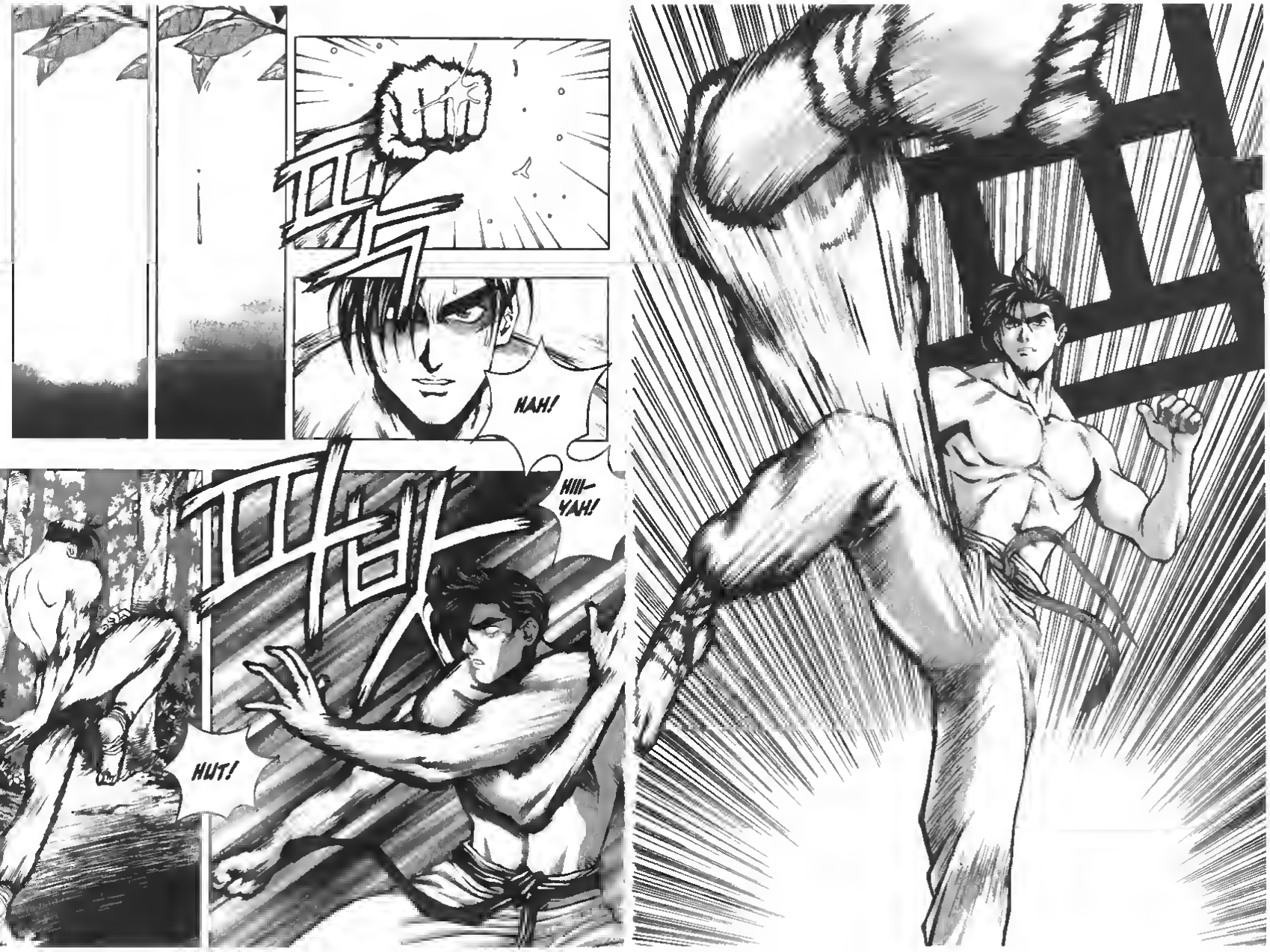
SIR ZETSOS, LET ME ASK YOU...
...IF IT'S NOT TOO EARLY...

ΔOK

I UNDERSTAND, SIRE TIMAR.
NO, YOU NO LONGER HAVE TO PAY TRIBUTE.

...!

Wow, what a babe!
WHAT'S ALL THE COMMOTION OUTSIDE?


HAH!
HIII-YAH!
HUT!

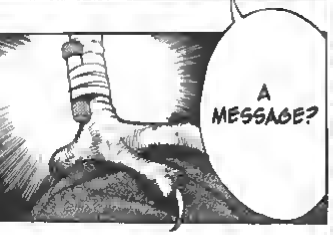
THAT'S BETTER! I THOUGHT I'D GO NUTS LYING AROUND ALL DAY!
I'M A LITTLE RUSTY, BUT NOT TOO--
AH, SIR HECTOR.
I'M AN OLD MAN, COOKING AND CHOPPING WOOD IN ORDER TO FEED YOU! AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING? YOU'RE RELAXING AND EXERCISING!
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT NO MATTER HOW ILL YOU ARE, YOU SHOULD ALWAYS RESPECT YOUR ELDERS? ESPECIALLY A WEAK, FRAIL OLD MAN LIKE ME!
W-WEAK? FRAIL?
YOUR OINTMENTS AND EXERCISES WORKED LIKE A MIRACLE.
HUH?
YOU DISRESPECTFUL PUNK!
BRING SOME WATER UP FROM THE LAKE SO WE CAN COOK!
ARGH!
LOOK! DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S TOO MUCH WORK FOR AN INVALID LIKE ME?
IS THAT A CHALLENGE?
He's tall!
...

OKAY! OKAY! I'LL GO!
CHILDREN DEFINITELY NEED TO BE BEATEN REGULARLY!

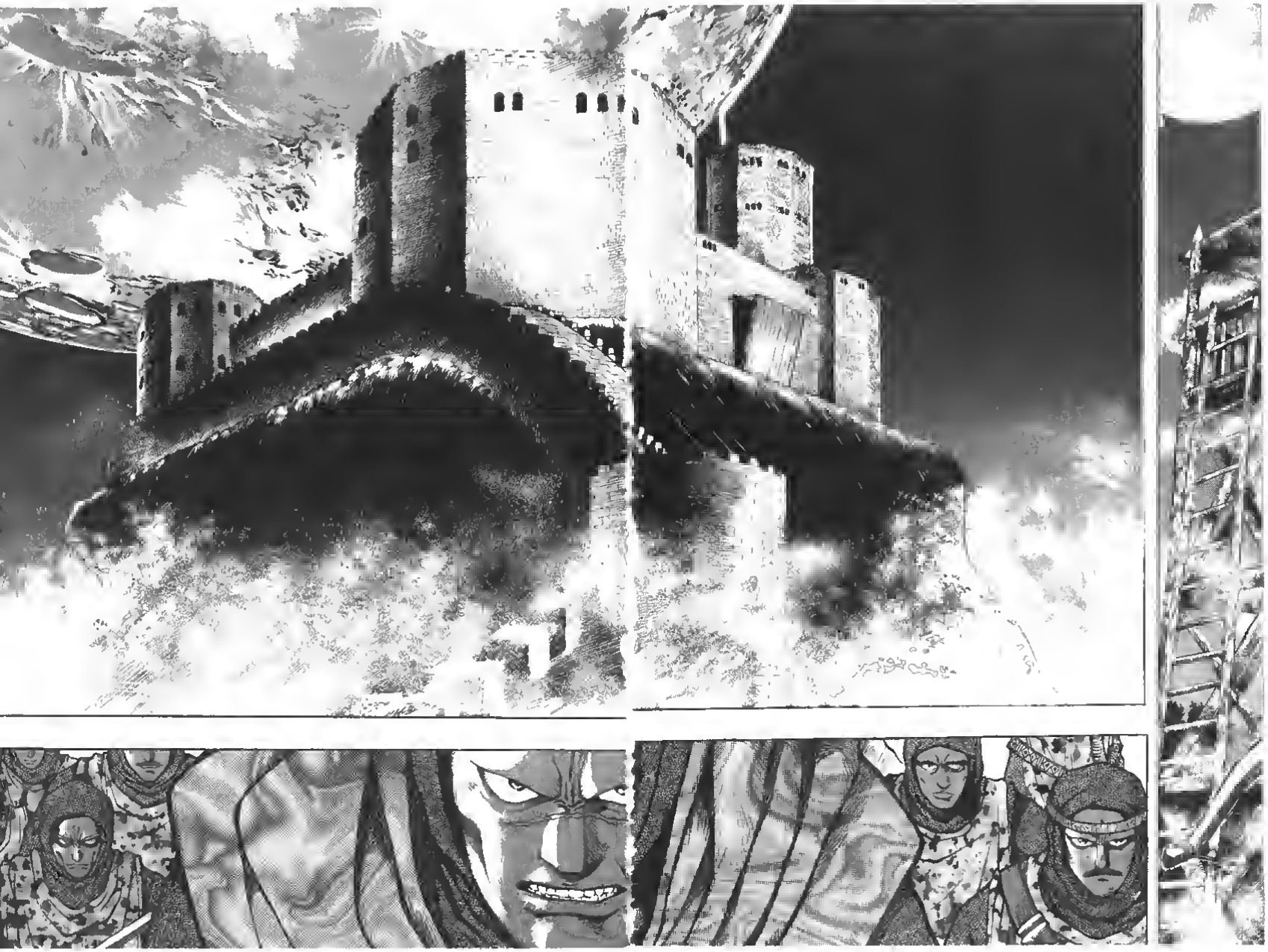
HM?

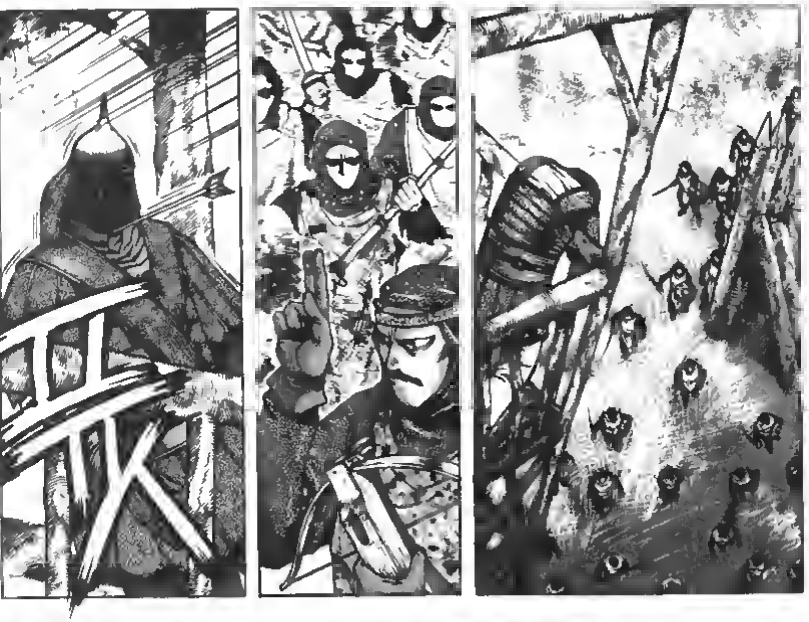
AFTER THE RAINS, FOG RISES OVER THE LAKE BEHIND NOMAN CASTLE.
WE CAN SEE NOTHING BEFORE US EXCEPT THE FULL MOON.

SIR ZETSOS, WE'VE RECEIVED WORD THAT OUR MAIN FORCES WILL ARRIVE IN THREE HOURS.
UNDER-STOOD!

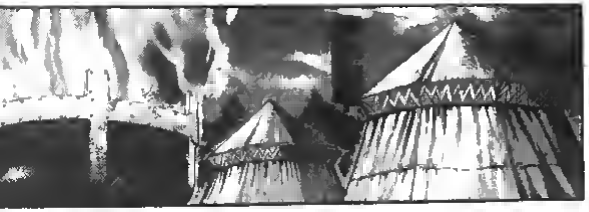

A MESSAGE?

EVERYONE, GET READY!

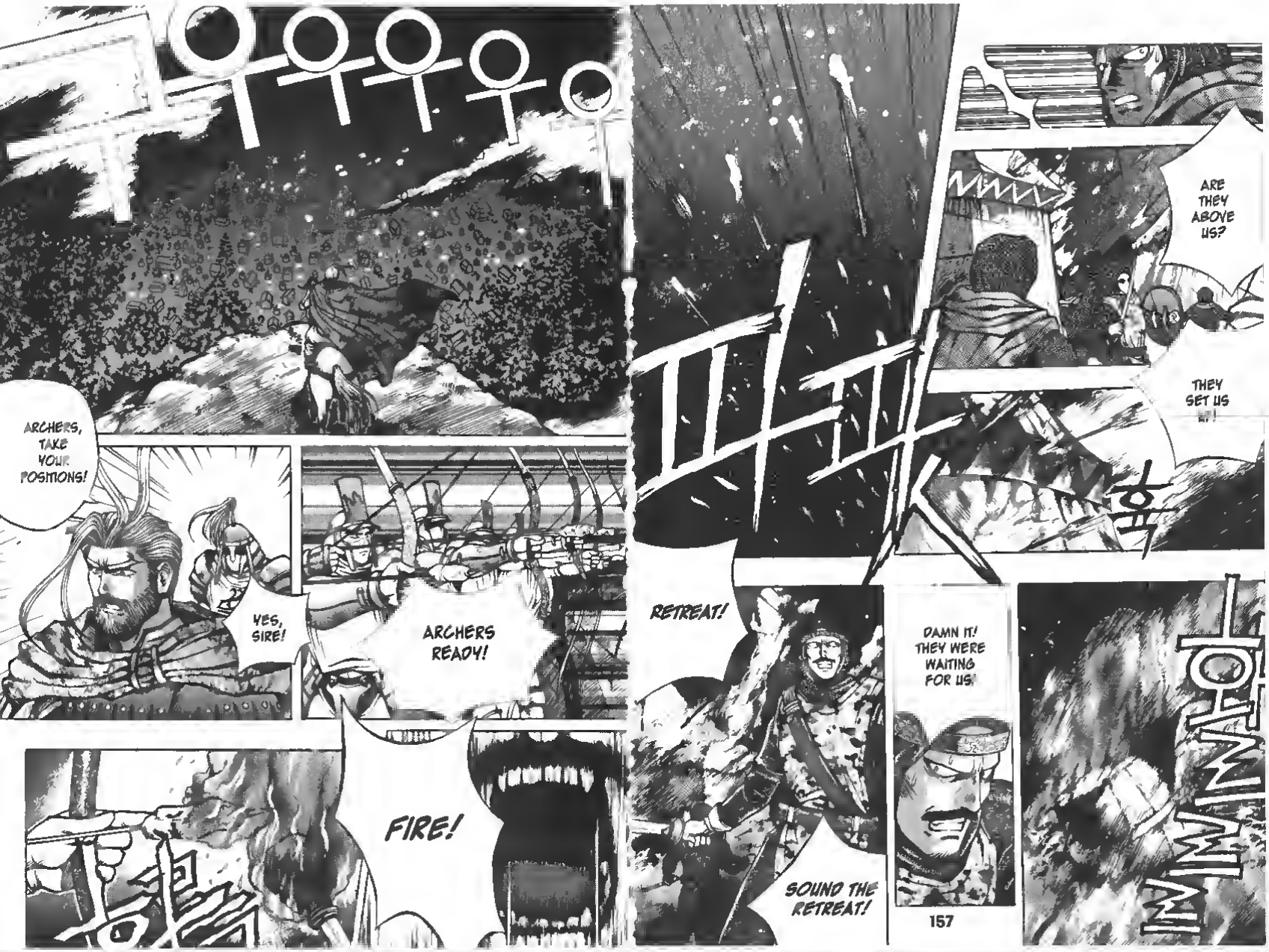




ATTACK!



GUARDS! WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!
와아아
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHERE DID THEY ALL GO?
ALL THEY LEFT BEHIND ARE TENTS AND HAYSTACKS!
ARE THEY HIDING?
WHAT?
WHERE WOULD THEY HIDE? IN EMPTY TENTS?
EMPTY...?
THERE'S NO ONE HERE! THEY'RE ALL GONE!
THERE MAY BE FOG, BUT IT DOES NOT HIDE THE FIRE ON THE PLAIN.
IT'S A GOOD TARGET!


ARCHERS, TAKE YOUR POSITIONS!
YES, SIRE!
ARCHERS READY!
FIRE!
ARE THEY ABOVE US?
THEY SET US UP!
RETREAT!
SOUND THE RETREAT!
DAMN IT! THEY WERE WAITING FOR US!

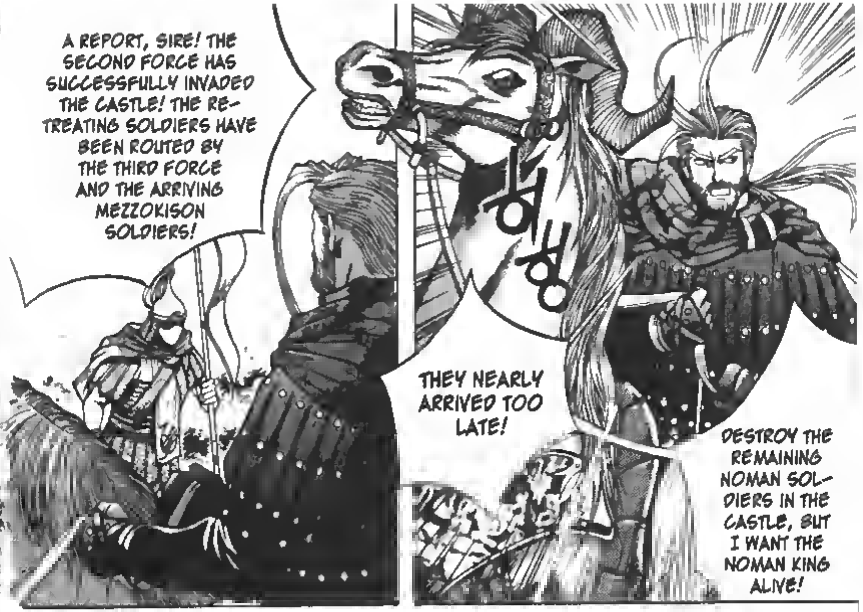
IT'S OIL! THE TENTS ARE FULL OF OIL!
DAMN IT! RETREAT! EVERYONE, RETREAT!
...!!
AGGH!

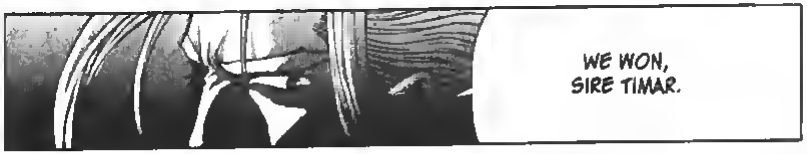
THE FOG IS AN ENEMY AND AN ALLY. IT PREVENTS US FROM SEEING THE ENEMY TROOPS EXITING THEIR CASTLE TO ATTACK US.
BUT IT ALSO PREVENTS THEM FROM SEEING US MOVING OUR CAMP AND HIDING OUR TROOPS.
THE SECOND AND THIRD FORCES BEFORE THE NOMAN CASTLE, ATTACK THE OPEN GATES!
FOURTH FORCE, ATTACK STRAIGHT DOWN THE MIDDLE OF THE CAMP! FIFTH FORCE, ATTACK THE NOMAN TROOPS THAT ARE RETREATING TOWARD THE CASTLE!

THERE GOES THE SIGNAL!
SECURE THE PORTCULLIS! PREVENT THEM FROM LOWERING IT!
ONCE INSIDE, SPLIT INTO TWO GROUPS! ATTACK THE ARCHERS FIRST!
OUR DEFENSES HAVE BEEN PENETRATED!
RETREAT! NOW, BE-FORE--
WHAT? OUR RETREAT HAS BEEN CUT OFF!

WHY DO YOU SNEAK LIKE RATS? COME AND FIGHT LIKE MEN!
DON'T LET A SINGLE NOMAN ESCAPE!
KILL THEM ALL!
DAMN IT! THERE MUST BE AN ESCAPE! FOLLOW ME TO--

THE MEZZOKISON FORCES HAVE ARRIVED!
EIGHT THOUSAND TROOPS!
THIS...
...IT...IT'S OVER.


A REPORT, SIRE! THE SECOND FORCE HAS SUCCESSFULLY INVADED THE CASTLE! THE RETREATING SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN ROUTED BY THE THIRD FORCE AND THE ARRIVING MEZZOKISON SOLDIERS!
THEY NEARLY ARRIVED TOO LATE!
DESTROY THE REMAINING NOMAN SOLDIERS IN THE CASTLE, BUT I WANT THE NOMAN KING ALIVE!


WE WON, SIRE TIMAR.

SO... EASILY...
WHAT HAPPENED? WHEN THE EMPEROR WAS ASSASSINATED, THE TROOPS' MORALE WAS DECIMATED...

...BUT THEIR CONFIDENCE WAS RESTORED WHEN THEY SAW WHAT THEIR NEW COMMANDER HAD PLANNED.
BEFORE THE ROMU TROOPS ARRIVE, I WANT THE NOMAN KING AS MY PRISONER!
IT WAS A GAMBLE, BUT ONE THAT PAID OFF! THEY FOLLOW ME NOW!
THIS MAN IS DANGEROUS!

MMM... SMELLS GREAT-- AS USUAL.
TA DA! IT'S READY!
SINAN BRAND'S MIX-IT-ALL-TOGETHER SOUP IS SERVED!

...!
DAMN IT! WHY AM I WASTING MY TIME COOKING?
EH!
I'M A SOLDIER! DOES THIS FOSSIL THINK THAT I'M SOME KITCHEN MAID?
WHY ALL THE SHOUTING?
I JUST... BURNT MYSELF. JUST A LITTLE.
HO! SMELLS GOOD. MAYBE I'LL LET YOU COOK ALL THE TIME!
I DON'T WANT TO COOK! I'M A SOLDIER!
WHAT WAS THAT? MY HEARING'S STARTING TO GO...
SIGH! I SAID, THANKS FOR THE COMPLIMENT!

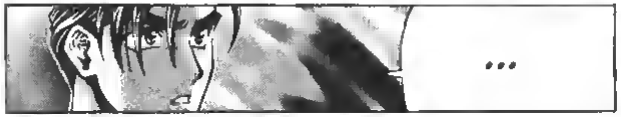
YOUR CHEST WOUND LOOKS NEARLY HEALED. I WAS WORRIED FOR A WHILE.
HOW DID YOU GET THAT WOUND, ANYWAY? IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A BURN...
WELL... IT'S A LONG STORY...
DIE!
DIE, SINAN!
I want some more!
MORE? YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH!
I'm starving!
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL ME, YOU DON'T HAVE TO.

I said I want some more!
BUT TELL ME, WHERE WERE YOU GOING? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
I...HAVE NO PLACE TO GO.
WHAT?

EVERYONE I KNEW IN THIS LAND IS GONE.
EVEN IF I GO BACK, I HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE I'D BE WELCOME.
NOT EVEN BY THAT GIRL? MAYI?
...
WELL, FINE THEN. WHY DON'T YOU STAY HERE UNTIL YOU FIND A PLACE?
AH, THANKS HECTOR, BUT--
NO NEED TO THANK ME I WAS GOING TO HIRE A HOUSEKEEPER ANYWAY. YOU COULD DO THAT IF YOU WANT TO EARN YOUR KEEP.
You know, dishes, laundry, cleaning
I KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO SAY THAT.
AND I'LL NEED SOMEONE TO ATTEND ME ON MY JOURNEY.
HUH? JOURNEY?

YES. I NEED TO TRY TO FIND SOME INFORMATION.
YOU SEE...

...I HEARD THAT AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE DIED TWO DAYS AGO.


...

WHAT ARE THESE GRAVE MARKERS? THERE ARE FIVE OF THEM...
YOU'RE A GOOD FRIEND. THERE'S NO BODY, YET YOU STILL MAKE A GRAVE FOR HIM.
FRIEND? NO, WE WERE BITTER ENEMIES!
...
WE THOUGHT SO MUCH ALIKE WE COULD COMPLETE EACH OTHER'S SENTENCES. BUT FATE MADE US ENEMIES.
I SUPPOSE THAT'S A TRAGEDY OF THIS ERA.

MANKIND EVOLVES ONLY WHEN THERE'S CONFLICT AND STRIFE, NOT PEACE.
EVOLUTION NEEDS SACRIFICE.
THIS FRIEND WAS A SACRIFICIAL LAMB LIKE ME.
THAT'S WHY I CAN'T LEAVE THIS PLACE.
I SEE.
YOU KNOW, YOUR MORE SERIOUS SIDE ISN'T ALL THAT LIKABLE, GRANDPA.
AND THESE OTHER FIVE GRAVES THAT LIE HERE WITHOUT BODIES...
...THEY'RE ALSO COMRADES OF MINE THAT DIED FIGHTING. EVOLUTION BURIED THEM, TOO.
IS THAT RIGHT? WELL, COME ON.
...
WE'RE LEAVING?
What did I do to deserve that?
WE'RE GOING TO THE PRATRIAN CASTLE!
PRATRIA!

READING THESE LAW BOOKS ALL DAY IS DRIVING ME NUTS!
YAWWWN!
MAYBE I'LL GO HUNTING WITH SATU TOMORROW.
I BROUGHT TEA FOR YOU, PRINCE NOODLES.
COME ON IN.

PSYCHE?
OH, IT IS YOU, PSYCHE! PLEASE, COME OVER HERE.
YOU'VE GROWN EVEN MORE BEAUTIFUL.
IT'S ONLY BEEN A FEW DAYS, BUT IT FEELS LIKE I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR MONTHS.
TO ME, IT FEELS LIKE IT'S BEEN YEARS. I WONDERED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF YOU DIDN'T COME BACK. OR IF YOU'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT ME--
HOW COULD I FORGET ABOUT YOU?

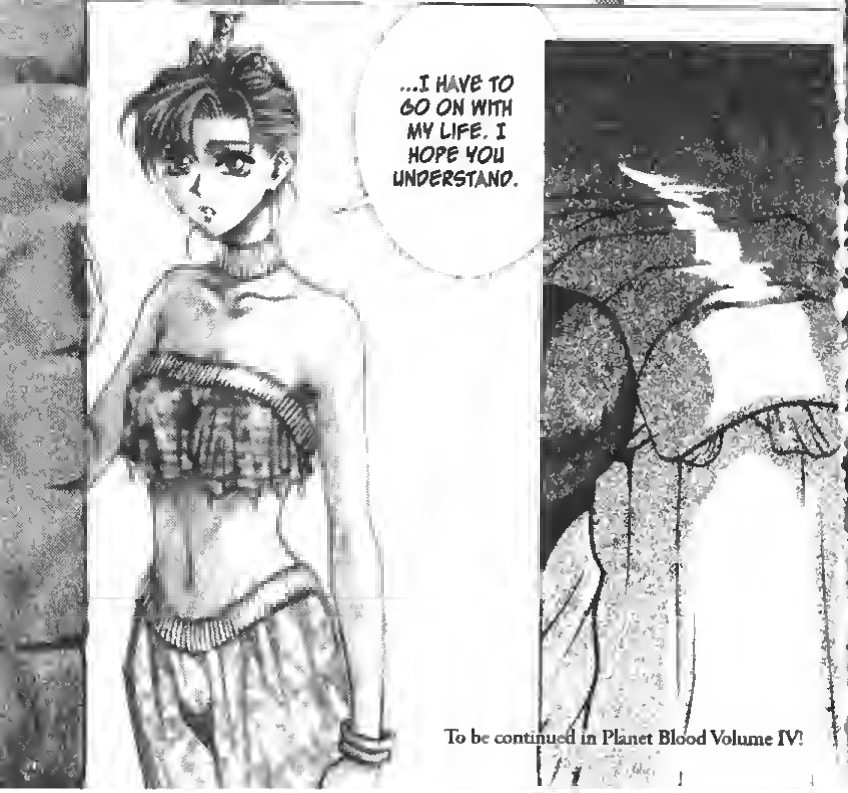
WHEN I TAKE YOU IN MY ARMS...
...SIXTEEN YEARS OF REVENGE DRAINS OUT OF ME. I FEEL SO PEACEFUL.
BUT IT'S JUST THE BE-GINNING.
WHAT'S A MAN AND A WOMAN GOING TO DO IN BROAD DAYLIGHT, ANYWAY?
GRRR... WHAT DO YOU WANT, SATU?
HUH? AH, YES.
THE AGREEMENT WITH THE LOCAL LORDS HAS BEEN SECURED. THEY WILL PROVIDE US WITH MEN AND SUPPLIES IF WE ATTACK MEZZOKISON.
PRINCE NOODLES!
SA...TU?
UH HUH...
AT THIS POINT, WE ESTIMATE THAT WE HAVE FIVE THOUSAND CAVALRY AND ABOUT EIGHTEEN THOUSAND INFANTRY. AHO THEY'RE ALL WELL TRAINED.
OH! DID I DISTURB YOU?
NO.. OF COURSE NOT.
Never any peace when he's around
I'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE, NOW.
PSYCHE, RETURN TO YOUR QUARTERS. I'LL BE THERE IN A MOMENT.
YES, YES, BUT WHAT ABOUT SINAN?
SINAN?
NO WORD ON HIM. SEARCH PARTIES ARE OUT, BUT THERE'S BEEN NO REPORT.
IT'S TOO EARLY TO GIVE UP!
I KNOW HE'S STILL ALIVE.
HE'S NOT THE TYPE WHO DIES THAT EASILY!

THE ROOM IS STILL THE SAME.
AND THESE...
THE CLOTHES SINAN WAS WEARING WHEN HE FIRST ARRIVED.

MAYI!
MAYI! WHERE ARE YOU?
SCOTT?
OH, THERE YOU ARE.
WHOSE ROOM IS THIS? YOURS? WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE?
IT'S NOTHING. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
HUH? I GUESS YOU'VE FORGOTTEN.
WE MADE A PROMISE, REMEMBER?
A PROMISE? A-ABOUT WHAT?

A DATE! I PROMISED YOU A DATE WHEN WE GOT BACK TO THE CASTLE!
DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE PROMISE WE MADE AT THE CAVE?
보-트!
THIS IS JUST THE TWO OF US! NO ATTENDANTS, NO AIDES, NO LADIES-IN-WAITING! OKAY?
BUT...I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO CONDUCT MYSELF ON THIS "DATE."
IT'S EASY! JUST ACT THE WAY YOU USUALLY DO!
AND IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, I'LL HELP.
OH. THAT THING WHERE A MAN AND A WOMAN MEET. THAT, YOU MEAN?
YES. YOU'RE NOT THINKING ABOUT BAILING OUT NOW...ARE YOU?
N-NO. I REMEMBER.
NOON TOMORROW AT THE FOUNTAIN! IT'S A DATE!
AH, YES! AND WEAR SOMETHING... NICE.
WELL, FINE! WHY DON'T WE MEET AT THE PLAZA FOUNTAIN AT NOON TO-MORROW?
THE FOUNTAIN?
THAT'S RIGHT! BUT LET ME MAKE ONE THING VERY CLEAR...

He's using an onion to make himself cry.



To be continued in Planet Blood Volume IV!

In the Next Volume...

Scott makes a move on Mayi's affection, as both Sinan and Mayi take each other for dead. However, when Scott learns that Sinan is still alive, he keeps this information from Mayi, fearing that it will derail his plan to woo the princess. Elsewhere, Sinan wins the affection of a villager named Eco, who vows to help him forget about his dead love, Mayi. Meanwhile, the Zetsos-Pantera alliance is moving against the Noman and the Romu kingdoms.

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A surprise attack on Noodles and his band of warriors leaves most of them scattered, each alone in the forest searching for a way out. But the fifth Neoptolemos is near and the secret to unlocking its power is within the group's reach. However, separated from the others, Scott and Mayi's journey back carries with it romantic overtones. And back on the warfront, an early attack on the kingdom of Noman tests Zetsos' allegiance to Murserek...

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